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Mapping Hinduism

'Hinduism' and the study of Indian religions, 1600–1776

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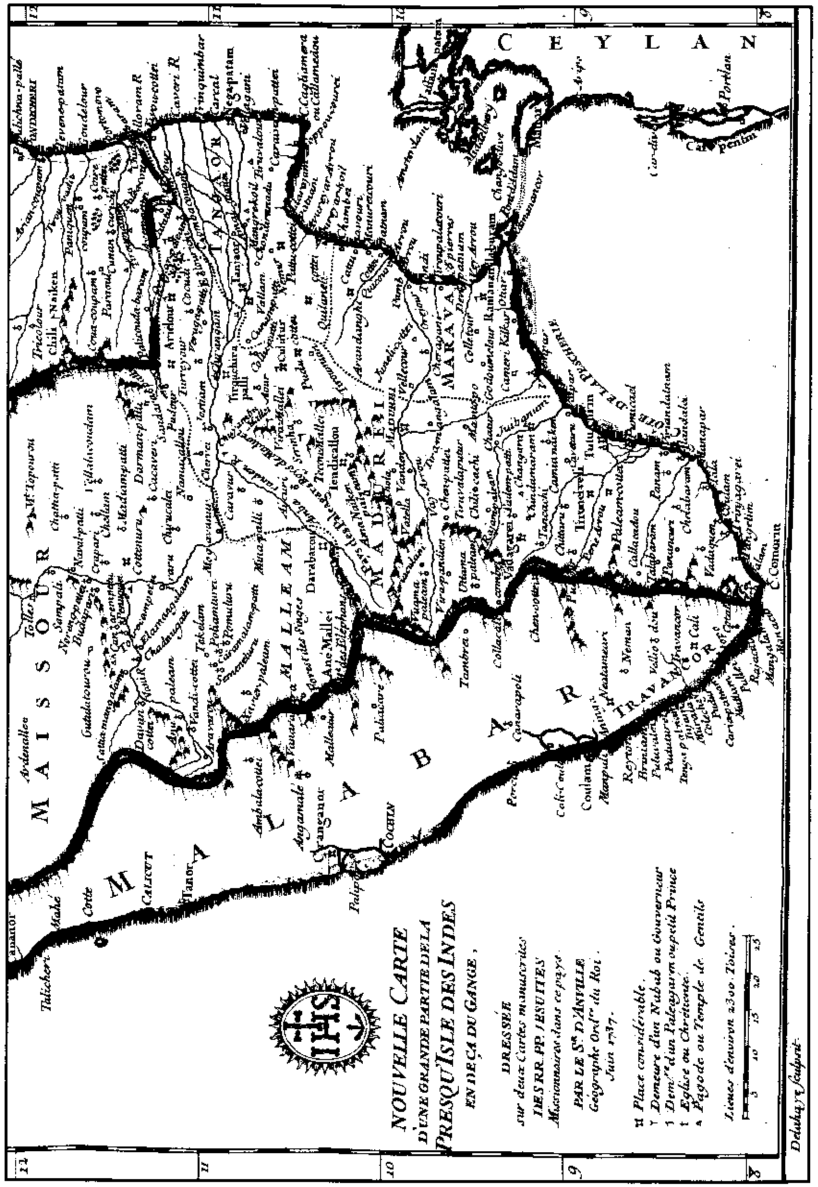
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... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that the map of one Province alone took up the whole of a City, and the map of the empire, the whole of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps did not satisfy and the Colleges of Cartographers set up a Map of the Empire which had the size of the Empire itself and coincided with it point by point. Less Addicted to the Study of Cartography, Succeeding Generations understood that this Widespread Map was Useless and not without Impiety they abandoned it to the Inclemencies of the Sun and of the Winters. In the deserts of the West some mangled Ruins of the Map lasted on, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in the whole Country there are no other relics of the Discipline of Geography.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Museum: On Rigor in Science'



Detail of Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, Nouvelle Carte d'une grande partie de la Presqu'Isle des Indes en deça du Gange (1737), in *Lettres édifiantes et curieses*, Recueil XXIII (1738), facing page 104

Contents

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Preface

How the Hindus Got Their Religion

Of making many books on the invention of that which we thought to have been given, natural or ancient there seems, indeed, to be no end. What Homer, Shaka Zulu, India, the Middle Ages, women, communities, tradition, the Victorians and the Pacific all have in common, we have recently been told, is that they were invented, constructed, created or imagined, mostly in the nineteenth century. Several writers have argued that Hinduism should be added to this list – it is this claim, 'that Hinduism was constructed, invented, or imagined by British scholars and colonial administrators in the nineteenth century and did not exist, in any meaningful sense, before this date'[1] which will be examined here through a study of several important European works on Hinduism from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The significance of the study of Hinduism – and the formation of the concept 'Hinduism' itself – is not only historical. 'The Hindu tradition has seemed to many of those who study it to be particularly refractory to definition'.[2] Virtually every introductory work on Hinduism begins with a discussion of the difficulty of defining its subject matter.[3] Although there are acknowledged difficulties with the definition of other religions, it is noticeable that, even in the context of the other Indian religions, Hinduism remains for some the indefinable religion *par excellence*: 'To study "Hinduism" is not the same as to study Buddhism, for unlike the latter, the former is not a defined (or probably, definable) entity.'[4] Given the apparent resistance of Hinduism to definition, the scholarly constitution of Hinduism as an object of study might well be thought to be paradigmatic of, and for, the study of religions.

The emergence of the concept 'Hinduism' may be seen as part of a wider process involving two further concepts, namely, 'religion' and 'the Orient'. These concepts, and the discourses associated with them, have

[1] Lorenzen 1999: 630. Lorenzen cites some of the 'many scholars' who have put forward this claim over the past decade arguing himself (1999: 631) that 'the claim that Hinduism was invented or constructed by European colonizers, mostly British, sometime after 1800 is false.'

[2] Smith 1987: 34.

[3] Nevertheless it should be noted that every such work is dependent on some conception of Hinduism, even if none is made explicit.

[4] Hardy 1990: 145.

recently been subject to extensive critique.[5] As both dependent upon and partly constitutive of these concepts, the construction of 'Hinduism' has not been exempt from these critiques.[6] The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a change in the meaning and range of application of the term 'religion' and the emergence of a tradition of study which lies at the roots of the contemporary academic study of religions.[7] The works studied here must be understood against this background, which shaped them as they shaped it. The first part of this book is concerned with establishing the proper status of 'Hinduism' as a conceptual tool in the modern academic study of religions. The first chapter reviews the conditions for the emergence of the academic study of religions, in particular the categories on which that enterprise depends, and above all the category 'religion' itself. It will be argued that the history of 'religion' reveals both the necessary conditions for the emergence of 'the history of religions'[8] and the nature of the term itself. Once 'religion' is seen to have had a history, it is apparent that it is part of a way of conceiving the world which is anchored, not in the way in which the world 'really' is, but in the way in which *we choose* to describe that world: 'religion' is a not a natural kind. The debate on the concept of religion ought therefore to be reconfigured. The crucial questions relate not to the supposed real nature of 'religion', but to the usefulness of the term 'religion' in the production of knowledge in the human sciences.

The next chapter will consider the arguments for thinking that the term 'Hinduism' is 'a particularly false conceptualization.'[9] It will be argued that the arguments for this proposition, and for the further claim that 'none of the so-called religions of Asia is a religion',[10] depend upon a failure to disentangle the concept of religion from its history. What that history demonstrates is the limited usefulness and the inevitably theory-laden status, not only of 'religion', but of *all* generalized terms in the

[5] For religion see McCutcheon 1997 and Fitzgerald 2000a; for the Orient see Said 1991, and other works which have extended the geographical focus of his analysis. Asad 1993 and Inden 1990 consider both concepts.

[6] See, for example, King 1999, chapter 5 'The modern myth of Hinduism'.

[7] J. Samuel Preus's *Explaining Religion*, is an attempt to write a history of this study, and thus to stabilize the concept of it as a 'research tradition that produced a new paradigm for the study of religion.' (Preus 1987: ix).

[8] This is one way of referring to that part of the division of academic labours which is otherwise referred to as *Religionswissenschaft,* the science of religion, the comparative study of religion, the phenomenology of religion, and religious studies. My reasons for preferring yet another designation ('the academic study of religion' or 'the academic study of religions') will be given below. I take these locutions to refer to the same scholarly endeavour, but also to embody some differing conceptions about the aims and presuppositions of that endeavour.

[9] Smith 1991: 63.

[10] Staal 1989: 398.

study of religions. Recognition of this in the case of the categories of 'religion' and 'Hinduism' has been hard-won; it would be a retrograde step to abandon these terms for the illusory promise of some concepts which are not implicated in an inevitably partial view of the way the world is. There are no such concepts. Not only is there no reason to abandon the use of 'religion' and 'Hinduism' but, precisely because it ought no longer to be possible to use these concepts without being aware that to do so is to apply a theoretical framework to the world, we should retain them: 'All data-gathering is theoretically inspired. The crucial issue is how aware of their theories data-gatherers are.'[11]

Many of the arguments against the use of 'Hinduism' refer to the history of the term. In recent scholarship something of a standard history of the origin of the term has emerged.[12] This history has, as E. E. Evans-Pritchard said of E. B. Tylor's account of the origin of the soul, 'the quality of a just-so story like "how the leopard got his spots". The ideas of soul and spirit could have arisen in the way Tylor supposed, but there is no evidence that they did.'[13] Likewise the concept of Hinduism could have arisen in the way in the way it is supposed to have in the standard account of its invention, but there is no evidence that it did. The next five chapters therefore provide a close reading of several major works in which the constitution of Hinduism as an object of study took place. It will be shown that while 'Hinduism' was indeed created rather than discovered, this was not a creation *ex nihilo*.

An important aim of this study will be to introduce synchronic and diachronic nuance into our understanding and evaluation of early European works on Hinduism. The failure to discriminate between the works and purposes of different writers on Indian religions in the recent critique of the 'imagining' of India and its religions, means that much of that critique can be reflexively applied to the account given of these early writers and their works. Baldly put, we must not assume that a seventeenth-century Dutch chaplain, an eighteenth-century French professional scholar, and a nineteenth-century British administrator approached Hinduism with the same interests and purposes. Our understanding of writers who spent different amounts of time in different parts of India, and approached Indian religions with different degrees of seriousness, is not advanced by considering them to be part of a single, homogeneous project to master India. On the contrary the degree to which accounts of Indian religions differed must be taken into account.

[11] Lawson and McCauley 1990: 10.

[12] See, for example, the formulations of this history by Heinrich von Stietencron and Richard King, quoted below p.34 and p.154, respectively.

[13] Evans-Pritchard 1965.

One of the outstanding features of all such accounts in the period under examination is their repeated denial of the adequacy of earlier accounts.

Nor should we accept without question a view of Europe's knowledge of Indian religions that sees only a steady improvement in quality of knowledge disseminated. This process was not the progressive accumulation of knowledge/power that it has been represented to be in both triumphalist late-nineteenth-century accounts and critical late-twentieth-century accounts. C. A. Bayly has argued that there is a significant change in the degree and kind of European knowledge of India around the third decade of the nineteenth century, when the British progressively cut themselves off from the 'affective knowledge' derived from participation in moral communities of belief and marriage, and the 'patrimonial knowledge' which came from having a direct ownership of property in a region, and turned instead to the more routinized, abstract information of statistics and surveys, thus compromising their understanding of Indian society.[14] There is certainly a significant alteration in the tone of *some* European writing on Indian religions from the early part of the nineteenth century, which may have resulted in a cruder portrait of Hinduism than that which was produced earlier. Despite, or perhaps because, of this, the earlier accounts which form the focus of this study have been little treated in recent scholarship.

Another aspect of the Orientalist critique which can be reflexively applied to some accounts of Orientalism, is the denial of agency to Indians implicit in the idea that Europe's knowledge of India was entirely the result of the European imagination.[15] Eugene F. Irschick, in a study of the production of knowledge in south India in the nineteenth century, has argued that in the long term

> scientific discourse and the institutions that represent it create a negotiated, heteroglot construction shaped by both the weak and the strong, the colonized and the colonizer, from the present and the past. Thus, it is not possible to find a single, definite origin to these meanings and institutions. They are neither "European" nor "indigenous." We must not essentialize any of the positions held by those involved in the dialogue. Equally important, we must recognize that the voices speaking at any given moment are tied to that specific historic instant.[16]

At every point, European knowledge of Indian religions depended on the *active* participation of some Indians in the production of knowledge about their religions. It is therefore important to recover as much as possible of

[14] Bayly 1996.

[15] See, for example, Ronald Inden's statement that 'the formation of Indological discourse made it possible' for 'European scholars, traders, and administrators to appropriate the power of Indians (not only the "masses", but also the "elite") to act for themselves.' Inden 1986: 403.

[16] Irschick 1994: 10.

what is known about the sources with whom European writers collaborated in the creation of 'Hinduism'.

Benson Saler writes that 'because Western folk categories continue to serve anthropology as sources for analytical categories, I recommend that anthropologists learn more about the cultural-historical matrices in which some of those categories were developed and applied. Doing so would expand understanding of their complexities and subtleties. Further, sophistication gained through the exercise of exploring those categories in their Euro-American settings might sharpen the anthropologist's sensitivities and sensibilities for attending to other people's categories.'[17] This book is intended to contribute to that process of learning, and to introduce complexity and subtlety into our understanding of the creation of 'Hinduism', while showing that not everything was invented in the nineteenth century.

[17] Saler 1993: 25–26.

1

'Religion' and the Academic Study of Religions

By the academic study of religions, I mean that field of study which has been variously referred to as *Religionswissenschaft* or the science of religion, the history of religions, the comparative study of religions, the phenomenology of religion and religious studies. My reasons for preferring 'the academic study of religions' to any other designation are connected with my conception of the origins and aims of the study of religions. The distinctive aim of the academic study of religions is the study of *all* religions, and its origins are therefore marked by a shift in the primary meaning of the term 'religion' from a sense roughly equivalent to 'piety' to a sense in which the word has a plural, and denotes a system of belief and practice. 'The religions' became species of the genus 'religion'. The history and implications of these changes will be examined below.

The designation, 'the academic study of religions' does not refer only to the study of religions in formal institutions of higher learning, although it does indicate the context in which the new attitude to religions which I wish to discuss has found its most extensive development. Were the academic study of religions to be taken to refer only to the study of religions in institutions of higher learning, the history of the discipline would begin with the establishment of the first chair of 'the general history of religions' in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Geneva in 1873 and later similar chairs elsewhere in Europe and the United States or perhaps somewhat earlier with the first lecture courses in the subject in the 1830s at the University of Basel and shortly afterwards elsewhere.[1] Rather, 'academic' should be taken in a broader sense, in which scepticism is an important component of meaning.[2] For the religiously sceptical environment in which the academic study of religions was born was not merely an historical accident but, I shall argue, a necessary ingredient in all approaches to religion that have some resemblance to the modern academic study of religions in the West.

The academic study of religions should therefore be distinguished from the treatment of 'other religions' which immediately preceded it, the motivation for which was primarily theological.[3] The academic study of

[1] See Sharpe 1986.
[2] The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) defines the older meaning of 'academic' as 'Belonging to the Academy, the school or philosophy of Plato; sceptical'.
[3] Pailin 1984.

religions has its own agenda, and this has been characterized as 'theological' both by those who argue that the study of religions has failed to free itself entirely from theological presuppositions,[4] and by those who argue that 'every secular positivism is revealed also to be a positivist theology'.[5] Nevertheless this account of the origins of the academic study of religions is premised upon the claim that in principle we may draw a distinction between those writers who are concerned with explaining 'other' religions (i. e. religions other than the writer's own), and those writers who are concerned with understanding and explaining all religions, or religion as such. The works of the latter form the basis of the modern academic study of religions. While many early writers on Hinduism may be placed in the former category, their works, perhaps unwittingly, helped to lay the foundation for the work of those in the latter, and thus also for the academic study of religions in the present day.

The origins of the academic study of religions

The substance of Jonathan Z. Smith's comment that 'simply put, the academic study of religion is a child of the Enlightenment' is repeated in the work of many other writers.[6] Kurt Rudolph notes that this is also true of many 'neighbouring disciplines',[7] by which he means disciplines such as anthropology, ethnology, and sociology which went on to gain a place in the academic curriculum. The rise and development of the academic study of religions is inextricably linked with these disciplines, but it is in the study of religion, the examination, criticism, repudiation and defence of religion, that the thinkers of the Enlightenment focus their efforts most intensely. Ernst Cassirer, in his influential study of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, states that the usual general characterization of the age of the Enlightenment is that 'its fundamental feature is obviously a critical and sceptical attitude toward religion.'[8] While Cassirer goes on to criticize this characterization, he denies only that the Enlightenment's attitude to religion was wholly critical and sceptical, and not that religion was, in one way or another, at the centre of Enlightenment thinking: 'All apparent opposition to religion which we meet in this age should not blind us to the fact that all intellectual problems are fused with religious problems, and that the former find their constant and deepest inspiration in the

[4] For example, Wiebe 1984, McCutcheon 1997.
[5] Milbank 1990: 139.
[6] Smith 1982: 104. See, above all, Preus 1987, and also Chidester 1996: xiii, Rudolph 1985: 23, Wiebe 1984: 402.
[7] Rudolph 1985: 23.
[8] Cassirer 1951: 134.

latter.' Peter Gay has been followed by many others in arguing that discussion of the Enlightenment demands 'regard for complexity: the men of the Enlightenment were divided by doctrine, temperament, environment, and generations.'[9] This is nowhere more true than in dealing with religion. The thinkers of the Enlightenment diverge so much in their views on religion that one cannot point to 'the Enlightenment attitude toward religion'. 'What, after all,' writes Gay, 'does Holbach, who ridiculed all religion [have in common] with Lessing, who practically tried to invent one?'[10] Nevertheless, as Cassirer writes, the philosophes do share a concern no longer only 'with what is merely believed but with the nature, tendency and function of belief as such.'[11] It is in this concern that we find the roots of the modern academic study of religions.[12] One of the clearest signs of this change of attitude toward religion may be seen in the changes that occur in the meanings of the term 'religion'.

The history of 'religion'

The changes in the sense of the term 'religion', already underway in the sixteenth century and establishing by the end of the eighteenth century the wider range of meanings that the term has today, have been documented by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his work *The Meaning and End of Religion* and, following Smith, by John Bossy and Peter Biller.[13] Prior to the seventeenth century, Smith argues, the Latin *religio* (and its derivatives in the major European languages), had a primarily adjectival rather than substantive or nominal sense, and referred to 'a quality of men's lives or a colouring of the world they perceive' rather than 'some independent substance or entity'.[14] That is, the use of the term was such that in most cases '"piety" could reasonably be substituted for "religion"'.[15] From the early seventeenth century, however, the leaders of European thought 'gave the name "religion" to the system, first in general but increasingly to the system of ideas, in which men of faith were involved or with which men of potential faith were confronted ... Thus began a long-range development, accumulating until today, of diversion of interest from man's personal sense of the holy to what we might call

[9] Gay 1967: xii.
[10] Gay 1967: xii.
[11] Cassirer 1951: 136.
[12] It will be shown that this concern was not exclusively with matters of belief, but included also other elements of religion.
[13] See Smith 1991 (first published in 1962), Bossy 1982, and Biller 1985.
[14] Smith 1991: 20.
[15] Smith 1991: 37.

the observable product or historical deposit of its outworking.'[16] The result was a new sense of 'religion' in which the word for the first time has a plural, and in English the singular may take an article.[17] This new sense of 'religion' necessitated the development of concepts by which the individual religions were identified. Thus in addition to the existing 'Christianity', 'Judaism', and 'Mahometanism', terms such as 'Hinduism' and 'Buddhism' were invented. Concomitant with this new understanding of 'the religions' is the development of a further dimension of meaning in the term 'religion'. This is religion as such, a generic concept which, as Smith puts it, serves to discriminate religion 'from other aspects of human life, such as art or economics.'[18] Finally Smith argues that since the Enlightenment there has been a further shift in the meaning of 'religion' from a theoretical system of doctrine to a sociological entity, a historical phenomenon. Thus 'Buddhism', for example, 'designated not what Buddhists ought to believe, but what Buddhists have believed.'[19] Smith concentrates on the consequences rather than the causes of these developments, but he does note that one of the characteristics of this new usage is that 'religion' and the terms used to designate the religions are usually, in origin at least, outsider's terms. The degree to which the outsider's terms are adopted by the adherents themselves has varied between the different religions.

Implicit in these changes in the meaning of 'religion' is the recognition, by those who so used the term, that the actions and passions of other people in relation to other gods are of the same kind as their own actions and passions in relation to the Christian god. In the earlier period of interest in them, other religions were not regarded as viable alternatives to Christianity, even by those who had already rejected Christianity.[20] The shift to the modern sense of religion, in which the religious beliefs and practices of humankind are regarded as being different instantiations of what is essentially one kind of phenomenon, is a momentous one. Bossy remarks that 'both [Roger] Bacon and Hugo Grotius seem to have been held back just on the verge of the modern sense [of 'religion'] by a residual unwillingness to reduce Christianity to the same level as other faiths.'[21]

In the part of his article that deals with the history of the term 'religion', Bossy differs from Smith only on a few points of detail. He agrees that in its classical Latin sense *religio* is 'essentially ... a feeling, a frame of

[16] Smith 1991: 38.
[17] Smith 1991: 48–9.
[18] Smith 1991: 49.
[19] Smith 1991: 78–9.
[20] Cf. Pailin 1984: 45.
[21] Bossy 1982: 7.

mind', but argues that 'in medieval Christianity this usage disappeared. With very few exceptions, the word was used to describe different sorts of monastic or similar rule'.[22] Bossy dates the shift to a 'reified' sense of religion in the mid-sixteenth century, with a further expansion of meaning 'principally during the first third of the seventeenth century' from the 'unwillingly conceded notion of a plurality of "religions"' to religion in general, 'the essence of all those entities visible in the world of which *the* Christian religion could be thought an example'.[23] Bossy emphasizes that the 'actual motor of [these changes] was ... the simple existence of a plurality of embodied and embattled faiths.' Objectification arose, he argues, 'out of the need to describe one's own or other people's way of belief and life, as if from outside, in circumstances where a plurality of such ways had come into existence.'[24] The awareness of religious plurality was, however, only a partial cause of the new understanding of religion and the religions that came about at this time. For evidence of another significant cause we start with the second part of Bossy's article.

Here Bossy is concerned with the term 'society' and he begins by stating that 'the history of the word "society" ... is practically identical with the history of the word "religion".'[25] By this he means that there is a move from a sense in which 'society' means 'companionship' or 'fellowship' (which he calls Sense I) to the modern sense of 'our most general term for the body of institutions and relationships within which a relatively large group of people live' (Sense II).[26] By examining what he calls 'the hinterland of Christian feeling' behind Sense I, he aims to show that 'the passage from Sense I to Sense II is a process of extracting the word from its Christian overtones.' Moreover he claims that 'the passage from subjectivity to objectivity, from active to passive, which we can see in Religion and Society, is characteristic of a large number of words in the same region at roughly the same time – for example, state, property, philosophy, charity, communion, conversation.'[27] He does not attempt to follow up what he rightly calls 'this substantial topic' beyond mentioning Michel Foucault's attempt to say something of a general kind about these changes in terms of an archaeological shift 'from an inclusive to an exclusive mode of mental classification, between a Renaissance mind operating with a system of resemblances, to a 'classical' mind operating through the establishment of identity and difference.'[28] It is sufficient for

[22] Bossy 1982: 4.
[23] Bossy 1982: 6.
[24] Bossy 1982: 5.
[25] Bossy 1982: 8.
[26] Bossy 1982: 8.
[27] Bossy 1982: 12.
[28] Bossy 1982: 13.

our purposes at this point to note that the shift in sense of the term religion may be part of a wider detachment from a Christian understanding of the world.

A heightened awareness of religious plurality and a dissatisfaction with the locally dominant religious tradition are not conditions unique to the European Enlightenment. If we are right in identifying these as causes of changes in the concept of religion then we should expect to find similar developments where similar conditions have existed. Peter Biller argues that in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe something like the modern notion of the religions is apparent in the development of 'the single nouns used to denote particular "religions" (or cult of particular "religions")' such as *Christian-ismus*, *-itas*; *Judaismus*; *gentilitas*, *pagan-ia*, *-ismus*, *-itas*; *Saracen-ia*, *-itas*, *-ismus* and derivative forms of *Mahomet*, and also in 'short phrases habitually used to name particular "religions" (or parts thereof), such as *lex christianorum*, "*fides* of", "*secta* of"'.[29] The rise of Waldensian and Catharinian sects within Christendom and the advance of the Mongols (whose religion may be described as developing from a base of theistic shamanism to Islam, Nestorianism and finally Buddhism), combined to create a sense of religious plurality. Biller argues that the result was the formation of nouns for new systems: *Valdesia* for Waldensianism and *Saracenitas* for Islam. 'For Catharism there was a renovation of the semantic content of an existing word, *heresis*: as used by inquisitors in southern France and when not further qualified (as in "the heresy of") it usually means *Catharism*, and Catharism as a "system", not simply a set of beliefs.'[30] Biller detects a similar hang towards 'reification' in the use of *lex*, *fides*, *secta* and even *religio* at this time and, significantly, he remarks that

> there may be a preference for one word for Christianity but another for other 'religions' when comparisons are being made. Thus Stephen of Bourbon (c. 1250–60) uses *fides* for Christianity and *secta* for others, including Christian heresies and Islam. However, the Franciscan Roger Bacon – perhaps an extreme example – is prepared to use the same word, *secta* or *lex*, both for Christianity and the others in a passage where he compares various 'religions'.[31]

Thus this earlier treatment of the religions as entities, by Christian writers, stops short of treating Christianity as just another religion, and is therefore an antecedent, rather than an early example, of the academic study of religions.[32]

We can conclude then, that the awareness of religious diversity, the awareness of the possibility of seeing religious beliefs and practices,

[29] Biller 1985: 360.
[30] Biller 1985: 365.
[31] Biller 1985: 367.
[32] Another example is the work of Tominaga Nakamoto. See below, p. 23.

including one's own, from the outside, is associated with a tendency to regard such beliefs and practices as objective entities, that is, as religions in the modern sense. However, something more was required if this sense of religion was to be established as the primary sense. Smith adverts to this second element when he writes: 'it is not entirely foolish to suggest that the rise of the concept "religion" is in some ways correlated with a decline in the practice of religion itself'.[33] He argues that a critical attitude to religion is apparent in another much earlier partial shift toward a reified sense of *religio*, in the writings of Cicero and, more especially, Lucretius. There is in *De Rerum Natura* and *De Natura Deorum* a suggestion of

> that philosophic 'Enlightenment' in which the intellect stands aside from all religious behaviour and contemplates it as an outsider, reflective or critical. There therefore emerges ... a new idea of religion, as a great objective something. It is thought of not as something that one does ... but for the first time as a theoretical entity of speculative interest ... something in which other people are involved.[34]

It is arguable that it is just this sense of a critical detachment from religion which we find in the thinkers of the Enlightenment. The awareness of the plurality of religions certainly contributed to this critical detachment, but there were also other factors, perhaps above all the religious fragmentation of the Reformation and its aftermath.[35]

The development of a critical attitude to religion is already apparent in the changes in the sense of 'religion' that have been considered. In the new sense which it has been given, 'religion' is essentially an outsider's term. So too, with the exception of 'Islam', are the terms by which the particular religions are designated.[36] As outsiders, those who use these terms are already to some degree detached from the reality that they describe using these terms. Indeed, this had to be the case, especially in the context of a religion that makes exclusivist claims, as Christianity did.

33 Smith 1991: 19.

34 Smith 1991: 22.

35 For evidence of the importance of this factor in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debates see Harrison's discussion of paganopapism (Harrison 1990: 144–46). For evidence of its continuing importance in the study of religion see Jonathan Z. Smith's discussion of Protestant anti-Catholic apologetics in the comparison of early Christianity with the religions of late antiquity (Smith 1990: 34). See also Cavanaugh 1995 (discussed below, p.24).

36 Although of course Islam was long referred to as 'Mahometanism'. It was not until the nineteenth century that the self-designation of Islam began to be used by those who commented on it in the West, and even now the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) defines Islam as 'The religious system of Mohammed, Mohammedanism'. Julius Lipner has suggested that 'it is disputable, to say the least, in what sense 'Hindu' is an outsider-designation'. (Lipner 1996: 112). Like 'religion', 'Hinduism' is a term which is derived from insider-usage but transformed in its use by outsiders.

For if the religious beliefs and practices of other peoples are to be admitted as religions, and not as heresies, or mere illusions, the question of their relative truth cannot be decided in advance.[37] Indeed, until they are admitted *as religions*, and thus as rivals to Christianity, itself conceived as a religion, the question of their relative truth cannot even be raised, for it is already decided in advance. In his account of early European approaches to Buddhism, Christopher Clausen writes that 'the assumption that the world was divided between one true faith and many pagan cults' had to be abandoned before what he calls open-minded discussion of another religion could take place.[38]

Thus in what, following Samuel Preus and others, I take to be one of the foundational works in the modern academic study of religion, David Hume's *The Natural History of Religion*, the first move is to set aside the question of the 'foundation of religion in reason' in favour of determining its 'origin in human nature'.[39] This detachment from religious faith may be methodological, as in the later phenomenologists' bracketing of such questions, or it may be existential, as was probably the case with Hume and a number of other early writers in the academic study of religions. Hume does, of course, consider the rational foundation of religion elsewhere and it is not insignificant that when he does his attitude is fundamentally sceptical.

That the description of the religions as religions already implies a critical distancing from religious faith has not gone unnoticed by adherents of the religions. Hence they have refused the application of the term to their own complexes of religious beliefs and practices. As part of his argument against the use of the term 'religion', Smith cites the objections of representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam to its use in their case.[40] Thus what this new vocabulary signifies is a refusal by those who began to use it to accept Christian theology's account both of Christianity itself and of the other religions. As Smith points out, for Zwingli,[41] Christianity is not the true religion, it is the only religion, or rather it is not 'a religion' at all. 'True religion' is what those who are within the church *have*; those outside are merely

37 Cf. Biller's remarks on the 'canon lawyers' use of *heretici* in a broad sense to include Jews and pagans'. (Biller 1985: 362, n.53).

38 Clausen 1973: 13.

39 Hume 1993: 134. Jonathan Z. Smith likewise finds Hume's work emblematic of 'the process of transposing "religion" from a supernatural to a natural history, from a theological to an anthropological category' (Smith 1998: 273). Cf. Segal 1994: 225.

40 It is true that the application of the term 'religion' to these traditions, especially to the Indian traditions, has also been disputed by those who are not adherents, but this is usually for different reasons and hence does not detract from the significance of the *adherents'* refusal.

41 Smith 1991: 35.

idolaters. But when Christianity is taken to be one among a number of entities of the same kind, this understanding cannot be maintained. Preus writes: 'The very last bastion of theology (or religious thought) was, and is, its claim to be able to explain *itself*, on "its own terms" ... the birth of the modern study of religion occurred at the point where that claim was effectively challenged – where the same procedures for explanation that seemed accurate and fruitful in the realms of nature and social institutions were now applied to religion itself.'[42] Likewise Peter Harrison argues that just as 'the world became the object of scientific enquiry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through a process of desacralization, so too, religious practices (initially those of other people) were demystified by the imposition of natural laws.'[43] The clearest indication of when this happened in the West was when Christianity became one religion among others; one species of the genus 'religion'. Significantly, those who continue to accept certain theological accounts of the religions are often among those who resist the description of Christianity as a religion.

The second part of *The Meaning and End of Religion* is devoted to Smith's reasons for thinking that the changes he has detected in the meaning of 'religion', and the associated rise of terms for designating the particular religions, are to be regretted. The substance of his argument is that

> The custom of interpreting other people's religious life under a series of rubrics of the several religions, some of them named, is Western, is recent, and has already passed its zenith ... In the European Age of Reason, when these concepts were developed and flourished, men might think to conceptualize their world without much sense of the numinous or much dissolvent sense of historical flux. Now that the presuppositions of that particular time and place are superseded or outflanked, we may well seek more appropriate terms than theirs in which to depict man's variegated and evolving encounter with transcendence.[44]

Our understanding has moved on, our terminology has yet to catch up. The use of 'religion' and its associated concepts is, says Smith, misleading not only for the historian of religions but also (and here we should remember that Smith is a theologian as well as an historian of religion) for 'the man of faith'.

Smith critiques the use of 'religion' as 'Western', as 'recent' and as having 'passed its zenith'. 'Religion', 'the religions' and the names given to the religions are modern, Western concepts. They were developed in response to a specific set of circumstances in the modern West, and for a specific purpose. The circumstances were characterized by an awareness of religious diversity and a critique of the locally dominant religious

[42] Preus 1987: xvi.
[43] Harrison 1990: 5.
[44] Smith 1991: 132–4.

tradition, the purpose was the analysis of the religions that presented themselves without reference to the explanations provided by the religious tradition that was being criticized, that is, the early academic study of religions. However, the fact that the concepts are Western is in itself no objection to their use. To the extent that other cultures find themselves in a similar situation and have a similar purpose, it is likely that they will develop comparable concepts. We have seen that on two occasions where there have been partially similar circumstances in the West's past, i. e. the late twelfth- and thirteenth-century, and the time of Cicero and Lucretius, there has been a partial shift towards development of these concepts. Smith himself notes evidence of similar developments in other cultures.[45]

Thus the custom, which Smith would have us abandon, 'of interpreting other people's religious life under a series of rubrics of the several religions' is not as recent as he believes it to be. In fact, the need for some objective grasp of religion, some view of the religions from the outside, of religion as a whole, has been felt periodically in the history of the Western intellectual encounter with religion. The circumstances in which this need has been felt usually include an increased awareness of religious diversity. In the recent history of the West, this sense of religious diversity combined with a powerful critique of the dominant Western religion to produce an approach to religion that is distinctively modern and Western, although not without precedent in the West, nor without parallel elsewhere. The eighteenth-century Japanese thinker Tominaga Nakamoto is said by Michael Pye to have made 'a profound contribution to the historical, descriptive, and theoretical study of religion without seeking to provide a normative statement on behalf of any one tradition to which he was beholden.' Pye stresses that Tominaga's was 'an entirely autonomous achievement' for he 'could not but be unaware' of the European Enlightenment. The parallelism, he concludes, 'inescapably suggests that there is a tendency, given certain intellectual and social presuppositions, for a historical and theoretical (and in this sense rational) critique of religion to emerge'.[46]

Believing that the use of terms such as 'Buddhism', 'Christianity', 'religion' is already past its zenith, Smith declares that he is 'bold enough to speculate whether these terms will not in fact have disappeared from

[45] See Smith 1991: 58–9 and 249–50. That in some cases contact with the West has been one of the elements in the situation leading to the development of a concept of 'religion', does not invalidate the point. One of the significant elements of the situation in which the West developed the concepts of religion and the religions was increased contact with other cultures. See also Pye 1992 and O'Connell 1973.
[46] Pye 1992: 27–28.

serious writing and careful speech within twenty-five years.'[47] More than forty years after this was written, one can only say that if this prediction was based on an extrapolation from the claim that the use of these terms is past its zenith, then that claim must be false. Scholars of religion continue to use them. In fact, to abandon these concepts would be to engage in something other than the academic study of religions. It would be a symptom of what Donald Wiebe has called the failure of nerve in the academic study of religion, by which he means 'the rejection of the scientific/academic goals it originally espoused'.[48] If one accepts that these concepts, or something very like them, are essential to the academic study of religions, then Smith's insistence that they are 'inadequate for the man of faith'[49] only reinforces the point that the aims of the academic study of religion are implicitly contradictory to those of theology (the province of Smith's 'man of faith').

Among the factors usually singled out as significant in the background to the rise of the academic study of religions are: the European voyages, first of exploration and later of conquest, which began in the fifteenth century, the interest of the deists in other religions, and the development of missionary activities, in particular those of the Society of Jesus from 1540. All of these were important, and together they led to an increasing appreciation of the reality of other religions. They would not, however, have led to an *academic* study of religion[50] had they not also contributed to a critical detachment from a Christian worldview, which was also dependent upon other factors such as the rise of science, the wars of religion,[51] and the revival of classical learning.[52] This critical detachment

[47] Smith 1991: 195.

[48] Wiebe 1984: 402.

[49] Smith 1991: 128.

[50] The sheer fact of religious diversity had long been apparent. Judaism, Islam and other near-Eastern religions such as Manichaeism had long been known to the Christian West, as had the paganism on its northern borders. Internally, religious diversity was apparent in the Christian heresies and in the religions of antiquity with which the West had been refamiliarized in the Renaissance.

[51] William T. Cavanaugh has argued that the European wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not so much wars of religion as wars of state: 'These wars were not simply a matter of conflict between "Protestantism" and "Catholicism", but were fought largely for the aggrandizement of the emerging State over the decaying remnants of the medieval ecclesial order.' (Cavanaugh 1995: 398). Nevertheless they can be seen to have contributed to the development of a new sense of religion: 'What is at issue behind these wars is the creation of "religion" as a set of beliefs which is defined as personal conviction and which can exist separately from one's public loyalty to the state.' (*Ibid.*, 403). In the light of our comment that adherents of the religions often reject the description of their complexes of beliefs and practices as 'religions', it is noteworthy that Cavanaugh resists this notion of religion in the name of 'The Church as Body of Christ [which] transgresses both the lines which separate public from private and the borders of the nation-states'. (*Ibid.*, 416).

from a religious worldview is evident in the new sense of 'religion' as 'a great objective something ... a theoretical entity of speculative interest ... *something in which other people are involved.*'[53] This change in the concept 'religion' thus produced religion as a new object of theoretical interest.

This account of the origin of the modern sense of 'religion' reveals its status as a term drawn from a specific religious tradition, but transformed by its rejection of the self-understanding of that tradition. The 'process of extracting the word from its Christian overtones' has, however, been drawn out, and the extended arguments over whether or not Hinduism is a religion will be analysed as evidence of a failure to complete that process, i. e. the failure to detach the concept of religion from the model of one particular religion. First, however, we need to analyse the proper status of the concept.

The future of 'religion'

It has been shown, by analysis of the history of the concept, that 'religion' in its modern sense properly belongs to a worldview which separates religion from other aspects of human existence, such as 'art' or 'economics'. Two corollaries follow: first, that there is a certain tension between this worldview and religious worldviews which deny that these aspects of life either can or should be separated from each other, and second, that this way of categorising the world is imposed upon the world arbitrarily, it does not emerge from the world itself. 'Religion' is not a natural kind. The first point was only gradually realized by the religious, who, as shown by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, tend to resist the use of the term 'religion'. The second point underlies Jonathan Z. Smith's claim that 'Religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study. It is created for the scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization. Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy.'[54] This claim is glossed by Russell McCutcheon as the contention that 'the category of religion is a conceptual tool and ought not to be confused with an ontological category actually existing in reality. In other words our use of the scholarly category religion is theoretically based, a model not to be confused with reality – whatever that may or may not be.'[55]

[52] On the conditions for the emergence of the academic study of religion see Khan 1990.

[53] Smith 1991: 22.

[54] Smith 1982: xi.

[55] McCutcheon 1997: viii.

The failure to appreciate the proper status of the concept of religion has produced interminable disputes both among the religious, and among scholars of religion. For those within the religions, the failure to realize that it is not the case that some beliefs or practices 'really' are, or are not, religious, has produced insoluble arguments over issues relating to conversion, authority and inculturation. The belief that 'there is a norm by which we can distinguish between social actions and the purely religious',[56] produced the 'Chinese rites' and 'Malabar rites' controversies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which have recurred in various guises elsewhere.[57] The same belief obscured the early nineteenth-century debate over *satī*. For the British the question of whether or not *satī* was a religious practice had to be resolved before they could legislate to ban it.[58]

For scholars of religion the failure to realize that it is not the case that some beliefs or practices 'really' are, or are not, religious, has produced insoluble arguments over issues relating to the definition of religion, and the drawing of boundaries between religions. It may be that for the religious, the belief that some things 'really' are religious while others are not, cannot be given up; it is my contention that scholars of religion *must* give up this belief.[59] This will involve giving up the belief that religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon, and integrating the study of religion with the other human sciences.

The category of religion embodies a principle of selection, usually selection for the purposes of comparison. To say that (what we call) Hinduism is a religion is to say something about how we intend to

[56] 'quod regulam, qua dignosci debent, quae sint apud hos Indos politica et quae sacra.' Nobili 1971: 154/155.

[57] On the Chinese rites see Minamiki 1985 and Rule 1986. On the Malabar rites see Neill 1985: 75–79 and below, p.60f. Related questions arising from the false distinction between religion and culture arose in the context of Christian mission in Africa. In west Africa, for example, the worship of *orisa* (subordinate gods) was forbidden to Christian converts as part of their prior idolatrous religious practices. 'The *orisa*, however, though personalized gods, are not clearly separated from *ogun* – charms and medicine colloquially called "juju". Some *orisa* are barely more than what works in a particular field, while some *ogun* must be invoked in order to work, or require incantations to be said. The category *ogun* includes all the extensive pharmacopoeia of the Yoruba, whose purpose was obviously good, and which was seen as a simple parallel to European medicines. *A line had to be drawn somewhere between devils and medicine*.' Peel 1968: 127, emphasis added.

[58] The question was in fact never resolved, rather it was determined that even if *satī* was a *religious* practice, it was not sanctioned by the most authoritative texts, and therefore could be banned without contravening the British policy of non-intervention in indigenous religious affairs.

[59] Cf. Laidlaw's comments on 'the question ... are these people really Buddhist, Jain, or whatever?' The question, he argues, 'is, ultimately, either theological or vacuous' (Laidlaw 1995: 6).

approach it, not about what Hinduism is. That is, we intend to approach it in the same way as we approach, for example, (what we call) Judaism. This is *not* because we already know that Judaism 'really' is a religion, and are therefore approaching Hinduism to determine whether it too, 'really' is a religion. Rather, it indicates only that we have made a similar decision to approach (what we call) Judaism as a religion. It is equally possible to approach Judaism, for example, as a system of social organization, a political ideology or as a cuisine.[60] Each of these approaches would tell us something different about (what we call) Judaism. The decision to adopt such an approach is arbitrary, except with respect to our purposes. That is, there is no way of making a compelling case for describing (what we call) Judaism as a religion rather than as a cuisine, without making reference to our own interests, our reasons for bothering to think about Judaism at all.[61] The decision to approach what we call Judaism as a religion can be justified only in terms of whether the results fulfil *our* purposes in making the approach.

The cumbersome way of speaking about the object of our study as 'what we call Hinduism' or 'what we call Judaism', indicates that there is a double process of selection going on when we describe Hinduism as a religion. The description of Hinduism as a religion indicates that we have chosen to approach the selection of data we have made and have chosen to call Hinduism, in the same way as we have chosen to approach the selection of data we have made and have chosen to call Judaism. 'Hinduism', 'Judaism', and 'religion' itself, may only be defined stipulatively.[62] Hinduism does not exist, except as a selection of data for a particular purpose.[63]

The representations which we make of religions may be understood by analogy with the process of cartography. Our scholarly constructions of Hinduism are partial models of a vast collection of historical and contemporary beliefs and practices of a group or groups of people known for at least several centuries as 'Hindus'. Likewise, a map of India is a partial model of a vast space designated as India.[64] The mountains, plains

[60] The last is not as flippant a choice as it may first appear. Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith's comments on 'culture as cuisine' (Smith 1982: 39–40).

[61] Which reasons may include, but do not necessarily have to take as determinative, the self-designation of those who call themselves Jews.

[62] Such definitions, if they are to be useful, will not be simply arbitrary, but will make reference to the ways in which the words are already used. See Baird 1991a: 6–8.

[63] The criticism that early European scholars distorted Hinduism is therefore entirely beside the point. We can say that their selection of data does not serve our purposes, but the selection of data that *we* make and identify as 'Hinduism', can no more be identified with what Hinduism 'really' is, than can their selection.

[64] The analogy is not coincidental. The first maps of what Edney calls India *per se*, i. e. 'the lands south of the entire circuit of northern mountains and including the lands west of the Indus' appeared at the same time (in the second decade of the eighteenth century) as

and rivers which are mapped exist (or have existed), just as people who worship Śiva, practice Agnyādhāna and believe Kṛṣṇa to be an avatāra of Viṣṇu exist (or have existed). 'India', however, exists only as a concept, and the same is true of 'Hinduism'.[65] The map should not be mistaken for reality. Moreover it is impossible to judge the accuracy of the map without reference to the intentions or purposes of the map-maker. A map indicating, for example, the 'Territorial Growth of the East India Company, to 1843'[66] may fulfil its purpose admirably (and thus be an accurate map) but be of no use whatsoever in indicating, say, the distribution of temples. Matthew Edney's comments on the kind of 'unconscionable' maps satirized by Jorge Luis Borges,[67] are equally pertinent for the ideal of an 'undistorted' representation of Hinduism:

> Even if it were epistemologically possible to construct the perfect, totalizing knowledge archive, it would have been institutionally impossible actually to do so. The possibility of constructing a map at 1:1 ignores the reasons why specific institutions make maps in the first place: to stand in for, to represent, the territories they depict in a wide variety of personal, social and cultural exchanges. Not only would a map at 1:1 be impractical ('the farmers objected: they said it would ... shut out the sunlight'), it would be quite useless ('so now we use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well').[68]

We cannot *use* a map on a 1:1 scale (*viz* 'undistorted' view of Hinduism), nor can we use the country itself (*viz* Hinduism) as its own map, it will *not* do nearly so well. What then are we aiming for in the study of religion? Not a one-to-one mapping of reality, not total knowledge. This is a fantasy which must be given up. What we ought to aim for is a collection of useful, partial, maps. The accuracy, and hence the usefulness of those maps, can only be judged by reference to their scale, that is, with reference to the purposes of the mapmaker. Given that a 1:1 map is not only impossible, but also useless, we must acknowledge that while the maps may be more or less partial, they are *always* partial. It

the Jesuits were first framing the concept of Hinduism as a pan-Indian religion. Thus the idea of India and the idea of Hinduism were coeval. See Edney 1997: 5–8 and p.162f. below.

[65] Although both have been, of course, defined, and exist, also as legal entities. While the boundaries of each for political or legal purposes can be defined, these may or may not coincide with the boundaries preferred by geographers or scholars of religion respectively.

[66] Such a map is reproduced in Edney 1997: xx.

[67] Borges 1964: 90.

[68] Edney 1997: 25. Edney quotes Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (London: Macmillan, 1894): 169. For an examination of the paradoxes raised by constructing a 1:1 map see Eco 1994.

is not even the case that the less partial a map is the more useful it is. '"Map is not territory" – but maps are all we possess.'[69]

'Religion' and the representation of Hinduism

Given that we can only judge the accuracy, or rather the usefulness, of any representation of 'Hinduism' with reference to the purposes for which it was constructed, two questions arise. First, what were the purposes of those writers who first constituted Hinduism as an object of study, and second, what are (or what ought to be) our purposes in approaching Hinduism. We will return to the first question in the course of examining significant writers on Hinduism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With respect to the second question, I would argue that here it is not enough to say that our purpose is, or ought to be, to give an accurate representation of Hinduism (with the implied ideal of an undistorted view of Hinduism in the back of our minds). On the cartographic analogy, this would be like saying our purpose is to draw an accurate map of India (with the implied ideal of a map on a scale of 1:1). We must specify our purposes more closely. And this is where we can offer a relevant critique of early writers on Hinduism: that they understood themselves to be offering an accurate representation of Hinduism, without taking into account the perspective from which they viewed it.

The ideal of an undistorted view of Hinduism, or for that matter of any religion, is a *religious* ideal. The ideal of such an understanding of the way things are, unmediated by language (and thus by concepts which have a specific history), is very old, going back in the western tradition at least to Plato. However, as Jonathan Z. Smith points out, in its more recent forms it is, 'above all, a modulation of one of the regnant Protestant *topoi* in which the category of inspiration has been transposed from the text to the experience of the interpreter, the one who is being directly addressed *through* the text ... As employed by some scholars in religious studies it must be judged a fantastic attempt to transform interpretation into revelation.'[70] The same ideal is apparent in the view of religion as a *sui generis* phenomenon, rather than as a scholarly abstraction from an historical flux in which there are no underlying essences. In the next chapter I will examine the consequences of the continuing influence of a (Protestant Christian) religious view of the nature of a religion in the debate over 'Hinduism'.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that this account itself is not exempt from the perspective outlined above – it is an attempt to recover a

[69] Smith 1978: 309.

[70] Smith 1990: 55.

particular history of the study of religion and, 'as with any map, it has depicted some things by leaving others invisible.'[71]

[71] Biggs 1999: 398. Cf. David Chidester's comment that, '[u]navoidably, any disciplinary history of the academic study of religion will be invented rather than merely discovered. Its narrative sequences inevitably will be devised in the present to serve present intellectual or institutional purposes' (Chidester 1996: xii).

2

The Critique of 'Hinduism'

It has been argued that while the academic study of religion, and the concept of religion upon which it depends, emerged from a culture which was still shaped by its Christian history, nevertheless the establishment of the modern sense of 'religion' was the result of 'a process of extracting the word from its Christian overtones'.[1] The continuing debate over the definition of religion and the range of applicability of the term is the result of unresolved conflict between a tradition of study that positions itself outside of religion[2] and elements of an older view of religion. The concept – like all abstractions – implies a categorization of phenomena which is imposed upon rather than emergent from them: 'Religion' is not a natural kind. It has been suggested that the rejection by some scholars of this claim is evidence that the term, and the discipline for which it serves as the central organising concept, has not yet fully completed the process of disengagement from Christian theological presuppositions described above. Thus Timothy Fitzgerald writes

> Religion is really the basis of a modern form of theology, which I will call liberal ecumenical theology, but some attempt has been made to disguise this fact by claiming that religion is a natural and/or a supernatural reality in the nature of things that all human individuals have a capacity for, regardless of their cultural context. This attempt to disguise the theological essence of the category and to present it as though it were a unique human reality irreducible to either theology or sociology suggests that it possesses some ideological function ... that is not fully acknowledged.[3]

[1] Bossy 1982: 12.

[2] Though it ought not to be thought that it can position itself outside of history, that is, outside of *any* particular viewpoint.

[3] Fitzgerald 2000a: 4–5. Elsewhere Fitzgerald writes: 'What I am arguing is that theology and what is at present called religious studies ought to be two logically separate levels of intellectual activity, but that in actual fact the latter is conceptually and institutionally dominated by the former. This domination is disguised because it is embedded in our *a priori* central analytical category, and abandoning that category altogether appears, even to scholars who are themselves critically aware of the legacy of phenomenology, to be throwing the baby out with the bathwater.' (Fitzgerald 1997: 97). In more general terms, others have suggested that the claim that religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon is associated with an approach to the study of religion which tends to assume the truth of religion. So McCutcheon notes that 'one aspect of the discourse on *sui generis* religion' is a 'theoretically undefended preference for sympathetic and descriptive insiders' accounts' and that the 'the dominant yet uncritical and theoretically undefendable conception of

Fitzgerald gives a number of arguments for this claim and for his further proposal that scholars who do not have a theological agenda ought to prefer terms which offer greater analytical precision than 'religion'. One such argument considers several works by religionists and anthropologists on Hinduism in order to show that 'religion' fails to pick out anything that can be analytically separated from other institutionalized aspects of Indian culture, that 'the category religion does not effectively demarcate any institutions located in a putatively non-religious domain such as Indian society', in short that 'Hinduism is not a "religion"'.[4] The claim is significant and is found in the work of several other scholars.[5] While agreeing with much of Fitzgerald's analysis – specifically that religion is not 'in the nature of things' or a reality irreducible by other forms of analysis, and that the study of religion continues to be too much influenced by unacknowledged Christian theological presuppositions – it will be argued here that it is precisely the claim that Hinduism is *not* a religion which reveals lingering Christian and theological influence even in the works of those who explicitly disclaim such influence. Such influence exists on two levels, the first relatively superficial, the other more profound. The first level will be demonstrated in three authors (R. N. Dandekar, Heinrich von Stietencron and S. N. Balagangadhara) who implicitly or explicitly model the concept of religion on Christianity. This model is disclaimed by two further authors (Frits Staal and Fitzgerald) but their arguments against the description of Hinduism as a religion, it will be argued, nevertheless depend upon a Protestant Christian epistemology and thus provide another indication that the academic study of religions has yet to transcend fully its origins in a particular religious tradition.

'Religion' as implicitly modelled upon Christianity

In his chapter on Hinduism for the *Handbook for the History of Religions*, a quasi-official document for the International Association for the History of Religions, R. N. Dandekar argues that

> Hinduism can hardly be called a religion at all in the popularly understood sense of the term. Unlike most religions, Hinduism does not regard the concept of god as being central to it. Hinduism is not a system of theology – it does not make any dogmatic affirmation regarding the nature of god ... Similarly, Hinduism does not venerate any particular person as its sole prophet or as its founder. It does not also recognize any particular book as its absolutely authoritative scripture. Further, Hinduism does not insist on any particular religious practice as being obligatory, nor does it accept any doctrine as its dogma. Hinduism can also not be identified with a specific moral code. Hinduism, as a religion, does not convey any definite or unitary idea. There is no dogma or practice which can be said to be either universal or essential to Hinduism as a whole. Indeed, those who call themselves Hindus may not necessarily have much in common as regards faith or worship. What is essential for one section of the Hindu community may not be necessarily so for another. And, yet, Hinduism has persisted through centuries as a distinct religious entity.[6]

The centrality of the concept of god, the veneration of a particular person as the founder of a religion and the recognition of a particular book as an absolutely authoritative scripture are characteristic of certain religions (Christianity and Islam in particular). Dandekar extrapolates from these characteristics and implicitly defines the 'popularly understood sense of the term' religion as including these three characteristics. Had he explicitly defined 'religion' in this way, it is likely that his definition would have been attacked as being too narrow, and in particular as being too much influenced by particular religions, especially certain forms of Christianity. Nevertheless what Dandekar's comments amount to is the claim that Hinduism is not like Christianity, or perhaps that Hinduism is not the same sort of religion that Christianity is. This claim is unobjectionable, but is nevertheless quite different from the claim that Hinduism is not a religion. Dandekar refers only to the '*popularly* understood sense of the term [religion]' and this allows him to conclude that 'Hinduism has persisted through centuries as a distinct religious entity.' Other writers, including S. N. Balagangadhara – who, significantly, misreads Dandekar as referring to the '*properly* understood sense' of religion[7] – draw more radical conclusions from structurally similar arguments.

One such is Heinrich von Stietencron, who argues that 'Hinduism' refers not to one religion, but rather should be taken 'to denote a socio-cultural unit or civilization which contains a plurality of distinct religions.'[8] The idea that Hinduism is a religion derives, he suggests, from a fundamental misunderstanding of the term 'Hindu', which was originally a Persian term denoting 'Indians in general.'[9] Following the permanent settlement of Muslims in India, Persian authors began to use

religion as *sui generis* effectively precludes other more socio-politically and historically sensitive methods and theories' (McCutcheon 1997: 122–123).

[4] Fitzgerald 2000a, chapter 7; see also Fitzgerald 2000b and 1990.

[5] It is so often repeated as virtually to constitute an axiom of research into the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. See, in addition to those discussed below, Smith 1987: 34, Hardy 1990: 145, Oberoi 1994: 17, Dalmia and Stietencron 1995: 20, Larson 1995: 31, and Frykenberg 1997: 82.

[6] Dandekar 1971: 237.

[7] Balagangadhara 1994:15.

[8] Stietencron 1997: 33.

[9] Stietencron 1997: 33.

the term to refer to Indians other than Muslims and identified several different religions among the Hindus. However, Stietencron argues that

> when Europeans started to use the term Hindoo, they applied it to the non-Muslim masses of India without those scholarly differentiations. Most people failed to realize that the term 'Hindu' corresponded exactly to their own word 'Indian' which is derived, like the name 'India', from the same Indus river, the *indos* of the Greek. The Hindu, they knew, was distinct from the Muslim, the Jew, the Christian, the Parsee and the Jain who were all present in the Indian coastal area known to western trade. Therefore they took the term 'Hindu' to designate the follower of a particular Indian religion. This was a fundamental misunderstanding of the term. And from Hindu the term 'Hinduism' was derived by way of abstraction, denoting an imagined religion of the vast majority of the population – something that had never existed as a 'religion' (*in the Western sense*) in the consciousness of the Indian people themselves.[10]

Given that, as several writers have recently shown, the modern sense of 'religion' as a reified entity in which other people are involved only began to develop in the West from the sixteenth century, it would hardly be surprising were such a concept not to be present in the consciousness of the Indian people prior to its articulation in the West.[11] Like Dandekar, Stietencron does not make explicit what he means by 'the Western sense' of religion.[12] We can gain some idea of what sense he intends by examining the counts on which Hinduism is said to fail to be a religion.

[10] Stietencron 1997: 33–34, emphasis added. This brief history of European usage of 'Hindu' or 'Hindoo' and 'Hinduism' is vastly oversimplified and represents Stietencron's attempt to reconstruct what might have happened rather than being based on examination of the relevant texts. A more detailed, but still inadequate, account of the same process is given by Stietencron in two other articles (Stietencron 1988 and 1995), discussed below p.157. John Marshall, in India from 1668 to 1677 knew that 'the name Hindoo' was a primarily geographical, not religious, concept (Marshall 1927: 182) and Stietencron acknowledges that 'the correct derivation (from the river) was current in Europe before 1768' (Stietencron 1997: 50). As will be shown below, accounts of Hinduism by the more scholarly of the early European writers were at least as sophisticated as the earlier Persian accounts with respect to distinguishing groups within Hinduism. The same may not have been true for travellers' tales, but it is hardly appropriate to compare these with the works of the outstanding Persian scholars Stietencron mentions (Abū-l Qāsim, al-Masūdī, al-Idrīsī and Shahrastānī). Lorenzen also notes that Stietencron 'quite blithely jumps from the sixth century B. C. to the nineteenth century A. D. with virtually no discussion whatever of the intervening uses of the term "Hindu" either by foreigners or native Indians.' Lorenzen 1999: 635.

[11] This is not to say that such an understanding of religion could not have developed independently of Western influence, as Michael Pye has shown in his discussion of the eighteenth-century Japanese thinker Tominaga Nakamoto (Pye 1992: 27–28). And indeed there is evidence of a reified understanding of religion in India in some circumstances. See O'Connell 1973, Wagle 1997, Lorenzen 1999, Sharma 2002.

[12] Although he does write that 'the term religion ... can only be applied to *corporately shared coherent systems* of world explanation and values.' (Stietencron 1997: 45, original emphasis).

Hinduism fails to be a religion for Stietencron because: 'There is hardly a single important teaching in "Hinduism" which can be shown to be valid for all Hindus, much less a comprehensive set of teachings.'[13] Here Stietencron perpetuates the idea, which he attributes to Christians, that doctrinal uniformity is the *sine qua non* of a religion: because Hinduism does not insist on doctrinal uniformity, it is not a religion. If this is what Stietencron means by saying that Hinduism 'never existed as a "religion" (in the Western sense)', then what his claim amounts to is that Hinduism is not, or is not like, Christianity. This much is not to be contested.[14] It does not follow that because Hinduism is not like Christianity, it is not a religion, unless religion be defined on an explicitly Christian model. Stietencron in fact comes close to this as an ostensive definition of religion when he argues that 'If we accept Judaism, Christianity and Islam as "religion" ... we cannot avoid concluding that there are a number of different "religions" existing side by side within "Hinduism".'[15] He therefore proposes that we should describe Vedic religion, Advaita Vedānta, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism (among others) as independent religions within the socio-cultural unit called Hinduism.[16] He argues that what we call 'Hinduism' 'embraces differences at least as explicitly fundamental as those between Judaism, Christianity and Islam' and that therefore 'we cannot avoid concluding that there are a number of different "religions" existing side by side within "Hinduism".'[17] Once again, the reasons for thinking of Advaita Vedānta, Vaiṣṇavism or Śaivism as independent religions are because they resemble Christianity:

> each of these religions possesses its own set of revealed holy scriptures recognized by all its members, each worships the same god as the highest deity, (or reverts to an impersonal Absolute as the highest principle, or recognizes a particular pantheon). Each of the literate Hindu religions has its own clearly identifiable and often immensely extensive theological literature, each knows its great saints, its major reformers, and the founders of sects.[18]

Stietencron admits 'No doubt, some of the Hindu religions are closely related to one another' but insists that, like Judaism, Christianity and Islam, 'they are different religions'. That which establishes difference in apparently similar forms of religion is 'the authoritative religious tradition received and perpetuated by a wider community ... Difference between

[13] Stietencron 1997: 36.

[14] Although it is also arguable that, despite some claims to the contrary, historically Christianity itself has not been characterized by doctrinal uniformity.

[15] Stietencron 1997: 41.

[16] An alternative view of these traditions as parts of a polycentric Hinduism has been advanced by Julius Lipner (Lipner 1994 and 1996).

[17] Stietencron 1997: 40–41.

[18] Stietencron 1997: 44.

religions is, therefore, a result of decisive variance in the authoritative traditions or belief systems.'[19] Again, we may see here the influence of a Protestant Christian insistence on belief as the final divider of religious communities.

Stietencron's proposal raises three questions of identity and authority: Who constitutes the community which receives and perpetuates authoritative religious tradition? Who decides when variance becomes 'decisive'? Who arbitrates what is and what is not 'authoritative tradition'? The difficulty in answering these questions reveals the arbitrary nature of Stietencron's willingness to describe Vaiṣṇavism, but not Hinduism, as a religion. All Stietencron is able to say is that 'A certain margin of tolerance usually allows for sectarian differentiation in doctrine and practice. Yet there are limits, unseen thresholds. Overstepping them leads to segregation or expulsion and, if there are enough followers, to forming a new religious unit.'[20] This is not to say that it is never appropriate to consider Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism as separate religions, merely that it is not the case that they, in contrast to Hinduism, 'really' are separate religions. In another article in which he argues for conceiving the several forms of Hinduism as independent religions, Stietencron states that 'None of these Hindu religions – except perhaps for monastic Advaita Vedānta – developed an all-India institutional body invested with the power to pass binding judgments on the correct exegesis of sacred scriptures. Diverging interpretations of religious tradition could not be effectively banned. Authority was never vested in a central organization comparable to the Roman church.'[21] Such a body would presumably be able to rule on what constitutes 'authoritative religious tradition', and what 'decisive variance'. Again, however, Hinduism appears not to be a religion because it lacks something definitive of certain forms of Christianity.

'Religion' as explicitly modelled upon Christianity

The claim that Hinduism is not a religion has been argued most vehemently and at greatest length by S. N. Balagangadhara.[22] For Balagangadhara, the 'Hinduism' discussed by European scholars is 'an imaginary entity',[23] a creation of European scholars, as are the other world religions supposed to have emerged from India:

[19] Stietencron 1997: 41–42.
[20] Stietencron 1997: 42.
[21] Stietencron 1995: 71.
[22] See Balagangadhara 1994.
[23] Balagangadhara 1994: 116, 298.

> The creation of Hinduism antedates that of Buddhism. By this, I do not imply that Hinduism existed in India before Buddhism came into being – this claim, after all, is a standard text-book trivium – but that the Europeans created Buddhism after they had created Hinduism.[24]

Balagangadhara gives several independent arguments and several versions of his thesis. The strongest thesis is that not only is Hinduism not a religion, but that it is impossible that Hinduism could be a religion: 'no matter what the facts are, there could simply be no 'religion' in India'.[25] His argument for this claim depends on his definition of a religion as 'an explanatorily intelligible account of the Cosmos and itself' and he concludes that 'Indian traditions could not possibly be religions because the issue of the origin of the world cannot properly be raised there.'[26] His argument for this strong version of his thesis will be considered briefly below, however, in his other arguments for a weaker version of his thesis, Balagangadhara makes explicit what I have argued is implicit in several other authors who argue that Hinduism is not a religion, and it is therefore this part of his work that will be discussed first.

Balagangadhara expresses the problem thus: 'Consider just what is being asked of us. The Hindus, the American-Indians, and the Greeks have (had) a set of traditions that lack the following: (i) creeds, (ii) beliefs in God; (iii) scriptures; (iv) churches. Despite this, these traditions are not only 'religions', but are also distinguishable from each other as religious traditions.'[27] He argues, however, that precisely these properties are 'what makes Judaism, Christianity and Islam into religions' for if 'we bracket away creeds, beliefs in God and prophets, existence of scriptures and churches from Judaism, Christianity and Islam ... we could not even tell the difference between these traditions, let alone distinguish them from Hinduism or Greek religion or whatever else. We would get an amorphous whole that could not even be called a religion.'[28] Balagangadhara sums up his argument in the following dilemma

> Some set of properties are absolutely necessary for some traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) to be religions. But if one accepts this, the threat is that other cultures appear not to have religions at all. For some reason or another, other cultures are said to have religions too. However, the conditions under which other cultures are to have religion are precisely those that make it impossible for the Semitic religions to be religions. That is to say, *if the Semitic religions are what religions are* other cultures do not have religions. If other cultures have religions,

[24] Balagangadhara 1994: 138.
[25] Balagangadhara 1994: 394.
[26] Balagangadhara 1994: 384, 398.
[27] Balagangadhara 1994: 22–3.
[28] Balagangadhara 1994: 23–24.

then the Semitic religions are not religions. The inconsistency lies in insisting that both statements are true.[29]

The crucial premise in this argument is the assumption that 'the Semitic religions are what religions are'; that is, rather than merely being examples of religion, they are '*exemplary instances, i. e. prototypical examples* of the category religion'.[30]

Balagangadhara justifies his choice of these religions as exemplary instances by arguing that when 'investigating that which is designated by the term "religion"'[31] we ought to start with cultures and languages where the term already exists because 'to pick out entities as prototypical instances of the term from other cultures and languages where the term "religion" itself does not exist is to take an epistemic decision. That is, one already assumes beforehand that objects from other cultures instantiate the term as well. Such a decision is not justifiable at this stage' i. e. at the start of an investigation into that to which the term "religion" refers.[32] Although the modern concept of religion first gained wide currency in the West, as argued above it emerged against the background of a growing detachment from Christianity rather than as a part of Christianity's uncontested self-description.[33] This important gloss is missing in Balagangadhara's argument. The academic study of the religions is not, in the words of Vivek Dhareshwar (discussing Balagangadhara), 'condemned to be Christian'.[34]

Balagangadhara concedes that applying this argument to Judaism and Islam may generate problems and hence limits his claim of prototypicality to Christianity: 'Whether Judaism and Islam are religions or not, at the least, our term picks out Christianity as one. When we use the category "religion", we minimally refer to Christianity.'[35] If one denies this, and argues that 'Christianity is not an exemplary instance of "religion", then we have no other examples of religion'.[36] Balagangadhara's argument, then, has the following form:

[29] Balagangadhara 1994: 24–5, emphasis added.
[30] Balagangadhara 1994: 301, original emphasis.
[31] Balagangadhara 1994: 304.
[32] Balagangadhara 1994: 305.
[33] Balagangadhara's second reason for choosing the Semitic religions as prototypical instances of religion is that "Each of the three traditions has described itself as a religion." (305). As Wilfred Cantwell Smith has shown, each has also denied the appropriateness of being so described.
[34] Dhareshwar 1996: 130. In the same volume both Philip Almond (Almond 1996: 140) and David Loy (Loy 1996: 151–152) note that Balagangadhara emphasizes too much the formative influence of Christianity on modern European thought.
[35] Balagangadhara 1994: 305.
[36] Balagangadhara 1994: 307.

First premise:	Christianity is prototypically what religion is.
Second premise:	Hinduism does not share all (or perhaps any) of the properties of Christianity.
Conclusion:	Hinduism is not a religion

The first premise, as Balagangadhara expresses it, is problematic, or at least ambiguous. However, the argument is only valid if he means something like the set of properties of Christianity is identical with the set of properties of (a) religion. I have argued that this argument is implicit in those authors who argue that Hinduism is not a religion because it lacks a founder, a single authoritative text or some other specified characteristic. The concept of religion invoked in these arguments is plainly too narrow, and too much influenced by Christianity. If such a concept has not already been abandoned by the academic study of religions (and reasons can be given for thinking that the process of doing so has started, even if it is not complete) then it certainly ought to be.[37]

Balagangadhara declares himself *tempted* to say that 'because some properties characteristic of Christianity are absent from traditions elsewhere (like, say, in "Hinduism" or "Buddhism"), the latter cannot possibly be religions.'[38] This position is justified, he writes 'only if one is able to show that the properties of Christianity which one has identified are also the properties of religion.' His first premise must be making a claim like this in order for his argument to be valid. But the section of his book in which this statement appears is entitled ' 8.3 "Thou shalt resist temptation ..."' and Balagangadhara refrains from saying that the sort of characteristics he has been discussing (creeds, beliefs, scriptures, churches) are the relevant properties of Christianity, i. e. those that make it a religion and the lack of which make Hinduism something other than a religion. He states: 'I am not defining explicitly what the concept "religion" means; I am simply identifying an example, a prototypical example of the category religion'.[39] He has not yet answered the question 'What *makes* Christianity a religion?'.[40] His answer, when it comes, is that 'religion is an explanatorily intelligible account of both the Cosmos

[37] E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley detect a theological bias in 'The insistence in the study of religion that texts and traditions are critical features of *full-fledged* religions' which, they argue, 'has always served as a strategy for insulating the "great" world religions generally and Christianity in particular from the sort of analyses otherwise reserved for "primitives" – which is to say, all the rest of humanity.' Lawson and McCauley 1990: 6.
[38] Balagangadhara 1994: 309.
[39] Balagangadhara 1994: 307.
[40] Balagangadhara 1994: 317.

and itself'.[41] Because the 'configuration of learning' in Asian cultures is performative, rather than theoretical, such accounts are 'absent from the cultures of Asia'[42] and hence Asia has ritual (performative) but not religious traditions. The argument is formally valid, but we have as little reason to accept Balagangadhara's restriction of religion to explanatorily intelligible accounts of the cosmos (of a type Hinduism allegedly cannot give) as we would to accept a definition of religion as necessarily involving creeds, beliefs, scriptures and churches. While Balagangadhara's definition is explicitly modelled upon Christianity, Philip Almond argues that even what Balagangadhara takes as 'as *essentially* or *prototypically* Christian' – and hence prototypically religious – is in fact 'only one particular manifestation of [Christianity], namely and crudely put, an Enlightenment deistic Christianity'[43] and thus that for most of its history Europe too would have lacked religions. In Balagangadhara's work we see clearly the form of the argument that I have suggested unwarrantedly underlies the claims of other authors that Hinduism is not a religion. Equally clearly we can see that this argument depends on a tendentious concept of religion. Balagangadhara himself acknowledges that 'there is a quasi-universal consensus that the "Western" concept of religion is inadequate'[44] but he fails to see that this in itself is not a reason for thinking that Hinduism is not a religion but rather a reason to work out a better concept of religion.

Religion, ritual and the real

While Frits Staal follows Balagangadhara in emphasizing the importance of ritual in Asian religion and in arguing that 'the idea of religion is essentially a Western concept, inspired by the three monotheistic religions of the West ... not applicable to the phenomena we find in and around the Himalayas',[45] unlike Balagangadhara, he does consider attempts to formulate wider conceptions of religion. Nevertheless in his argument he does at times slip back into a position formally similar to that of Balagangadhara and the other authors discussed above. More significantly he also depends upon an epistemological ideal which is arguably still more profoundly influenced by Protestant Christian thought, and which, it will be argued, is shared by Fitzgerald.

[41] Balagangadhara 1994: 384. His argument for this definition is given in pages 331–334.
[42] Balagangadhara 1994: 314.
[43] Almond 1996: 144.
[44] Balagangadhara 1994: 313.
[45] Staal 1982: 39.

Discussing what he calls '"religion" in its fullest sense', Staal writes: 'Doctrines and beliefs are regarded as religious when they involve belief in a god or gods, in paradise and hell, salvation, and similar religious concepts that are characteristic of the three monotheistic religions of the West.'[46] He makes the point that 'most of the other 'religions' of mankind are deficient in one or another respect when studied within this perspective:

> The main reason, however, that Asian traditions do not fit *the Western pattern of religion* is that their emphasis is not on doctrines or beliefs, but on ritual, mysticism or both. In so far as doctrines or beliefs are mentioned at all, they are not primary but added: they are of the nature of secondary interpretations, often rationalizations and generally after-thoughts.[47]

There are certainly counter-examples to Staal's characterization of Asian traditions. It would be difficult, for example, to describe Rāmānuja's project as a secondary interpretation, a rationalization or an after-thought.[48] Nevertheless Staal asserts that

> Hinduism does not merely fail to be a religion; it is not even a meaningful unit of discourse. There is no way to abstract a meaningful unitary notion of Hinduism from the Indian phenomena, unless it is done by exclusion, following the well-worn formula: a Hindu is an Indian who is *not* a Jaina, Buddhist, Parsi, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Animist ... (the list is indefinite). When faced with such data, should we abandon the concept of religion altogether? Basically, there are two possible procedures. We can either start with a rather narrow concept of 'religion', based upon the three Western monotheisms, and see to what extent such a concept of religion can be used in Asia. Or else we can try to formulate a wider and more flexible concept, and see just where that leads us.[49]

Staal suggests that the concept of religion to be used in the first procedure 'would involve such notions as a belief in God, a holy book, and (at least in two cases out of these three) a historic founder.'[50] Because the Asian traditions lack some of these characteristics (Buddhism and Confucianism have 'a founder, but neither a belief in God nor a holy book', Taoism a founder and a holy book but no belief in God) Staal concludes that 'none of the so-called religions of Asia is a religion in this sense ... any notion of religion that is based upon characteristics of the three Western monotheistic religions is inapplicable in Asia.'[51] Conspicuous by its absence in

[46] Staal 1989: 389. Elsewhere he acknowledges that far from being the 'its fullest sense' a concept of religion based upon the three Western monotheisms would be 'a rather narrow concept of religion'. 1989: 397.
[47] Staal 1989: 389–390, emphasis added.
[48] See Lipner 1986.
[49] Staal 1989: 397.
[50] Staal 1989: 398.
[51] Staal 1989: 398.

this analysis is any reference to Sikhism, which we might want say has all three characteristics. Nevertheless, we can admit Staal's point to a degree, which amounts, once again, to the claim that Asian religions are, in some respects, not like the western monotheisms.

Staal's argument relies on equating two subtly different concepts which ought to be distinguished from each other. The first is 'religion in the Western sense' (415, 416), which may be taken to mean what religion is, or what forms it has taken, in the West. Thus, 'religion in the Western sense' may be taken to mean that form of monotheistic belief and practice represented by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The second is 'the Western concept of religion' (419) or 'Western notions of religion' (393) which refers, or ought to refer, to that concept of religion which developed in the West from about the sixteenth century. This concept is not identical to the self-perception of the western monotheisms. It did emerge in the modern west, but it emerged out of criticism of religion, especially of Christianity. Moreover, the concept has continued to develop, and is no longer, or at least ought no longer to be, dominated by a Protestant Christian emphasis on doctrine or belief.[52] Thus the modern academic concept of 'religion', although Western in origin and perhaps also in use, is not identical to the form(s) that religion has taken in the West. The 'Western concept of religion' no longer means only 'religions in the Western sense', still less 'Western religions'. It is clear that Asian religions are in significant respects not 'religions in the Western sense' i. e. not monotheistic traditions which place a certain kind of emphasis on doctrinal conformity. Staal has *not* shown, however, 'the inapplicability of Western notions of religion to the traditions of Asia',[53] i. e. that Asian traditions cannot be understood through a concept of religion which is not modelled on any specific tradition and no longer takes belief to be the all-important feature of religion.

Staal concludes that 'the imposition of the Western concept of religion on the rest of the world illustrates how Western imperialism continues to thrive in the realms of thought'.[54] Ironically, in insisting that Asian traditions are not religions (because they are not religions of the same sort as Christianity and Islam, that is, they are not religions 'in the Western sense'), it is Staal who remains enthralled by *a* Western concept of

[52] David Chidester lists those who have argued for 'an open, multiple, or polythetic definition of religion.' (Chidester 1996: 259). Brian K. Smith has attempted a definition which takes seriously elements of religion which Asian religions have found to be important. He proposes a definition which does not depend on transcendent referents. Religion, he argues, 'is defined by its rules of discourse, rules that always (by definition) involve the necessary return to an authoritative source or canon to legitimize all present and past creations, perpetuations, and transformations of that tradition.' (Smith 1987: 53).

[53] Staal 1989: 393.

[54] Staal 1989: 419.

religion. Insofar as his argument relies on the slippage between 'religion in the Western sense' and 'the Western concept of religion' it is formally similar to that of Stietencron and Balagangadhara. Staal does however acknowledge that this is a 'rather narrow' concept of religion and suggests that we might 'try to formulate a wider and more flexible concept, and see just where that leads us.'[55] As it has been argued here that this is precisely what in fact has happened during two centuries of academic study of the religions, his argument must be examined for he concludes that this does not enable us to rescue 'religion' as a universal term, and that we ought either to abandon religion or to confine its use to the Western monotheisms.

Staal uses what he calls an '"extended-Durkheim" concept of religion, which incorporates the categories of doctrine (belief), ritual, mystical experience and meditation (the latter either as a fourth category or as a subcategory of one or two of the others).'[56] Of the categories he states that 'rites [or rituals] are primary because they are almost always independent and can be accounted for on their own terms ... Rites become "religious" when they are provided with a religious interpretation.'[57] Moreover:

> Rituals are not merely remarkably persistent *within* so-called religious traditions, where they are provided with constantly changing interpretations; rituals remain the same even across so-called religious boundaries: they are *invariant under religious transformation.* This is demonstrated by the fact that the same rites occur in Vedic, Hindu and Buddhist forms, not only in India but also in China, Japan, Tibet, and Indonesia.[58]

Staal says little about the other categories noting only that 'like the other so-called religions of Asia, Buddhism is characterized by the fact that ritual (in which all monks engage) is more important than mystical experience (which only a few attain), which is in turn more important than belief or doctrine (a matter confined to philosophers, scholarly monks or reserved for Western converts, anthropologists, and tourists).'[59] Thus, for Staal, 'the trio of ritual, meditation and mystical experience are more fundamental than the category of religion itself', ritual being the most important of these three in the Asian traditions. But because 'rituals remain the same even across so-called religious boundaries' they cannot be used to justify our existing taxonomy of religions. 'Only doctrine or

[55] Staal 1989: 397.

[56] Staal 1989: 401.

[57] Staal 1989: 388.

[58] Staal 1989: 401.

[59] Staal 1989: 400. He leaves aside the question of 'whether meditation constitutes a fourth "fundamental category"' noting only that 'Meditation, at any rate, is not gazing upon nothing (except in the limiting case), but is closely related to ritual and mantras.'

belief may be in a position to constitute a religious category *per se*.'[60] This lack of correspondence between rituals and beliefs means that if

we adopt the 'extended-Durkheim' concept of religion, which incorporates the categories of doctrine (belief), ritual, mystical experience and meditation ... we have a concept on our hands that has all the characteristics of pathological, if not monstrous growth, tumorous with category blunders. It is worse than a spider with a submarine, a burning bush, an expectation and a human head.

Even in Buddhism, 'the Asian tradition that is in many respects most religion-like, doctrine plays a subordinate role and mystical experience and rites are basic'.[61] Therefore, says Staal

We must conclude that the concept of religion is not a coherent concept and therefore misleading. It does not hang together like a concept should and should either be abandoned or confined to Western traditions.[62]

Attention to ritual, rather than belief, as a defining feature of religion may well produce a taxonomy of religions different from the one we are familiar with, although Staal does not suggest what such a taxonomy based on ritual might look like. Such a taxonomy may be more useful in understanding the history and function of Asian religion,[63] but would be neither more nor less a natural taxonomy – given in the nature of things – than one based upon belief.

Staal's proposal raises the question of how we are to describe the 'Asian traditions that are generally called religions' (405–6) if we abandon the concept of 'religion' or redefine it to refer specifically to doctrine and confine it to Western traditions. Although at one point he refers to Buddhism as 'a ritual-mystical cult' (406), Staal more often relies on other locutions such as 'so-called religions' or 'traditions'. Thus he speaks of 'the so-called religions of Asia' (398, 400) or 'the so-called religions of mankind' (418). Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and

[60] Staal 1989: 401.

[61] Staal 1989: 414–15. Staal concedes that 'A phenomenon more like religion in the Western sense appears in the later phases of development of several Asian traditions' (415). By this he means the development of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism and of the Bodhisattva ideal in Buddhism. Because these phenomena are more like 'religion in the Western sense', he is prepared also to describe them using 'the Western concept of religion'. Thus Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism 'should perhaps be regarded as the first two indigenous religions of India' for with their appearance 'a Hindu is no longer an Indian concerned about what he must do while thinking anything he likes', but becomes, for the first time, 'a believer in God equipped with faith and a holy book.' (415). Buddhists finally have belief 'not in God but in the Buddha' (416) and Buddhism is therefore closer to being a religion although it still lacks a single authoritative text.

[62] Staal 1989: 415.

[63] Although not in every case. As Staal notes, many of the rituals in which Buddhist monks engage are 'independent of Buddhism' (1989: 401) and therefore would not be significant in defining a useful taxonomy.

Buddhism are all referred to as 'Asian traditions' or 'Indian traditions' (390, 406, 410, 414, 415). Staal also refers to 'so-called religious traditions' (401), the 'Asian traditions that are generally called religions' (405–6), 'what is now called a "religious" tradition' (393) and simply 'religious traditions' (387). The difficulty Staal has in escaping some collective term for the phenomena he wishes to discuss is not insignificant, and will be returned to later. Here the point is that 'Western traditions' and 'non-Western traditions' (415) are discussed together in a way that suggests the only difference between them is that Western traditions are concerned with doctrine and are therefore religious while non-Western traditions are not. They seem nevertheless to be treated by Staal as members of a class, comparable with each other. In practice then, Staal replaces 'religion' with 'tradition', which traditions may be religious or not. A concern with doctrine makes a tradition a religious tradition, a concern with ritual does not.

Staal does not seem to be able to avoid defining religion in relation to doctrine or belief – 'Only doctrine or belief may be in a position to constitute a religious category *per se*.'[64] While this lingering influence of Protestant Christian conceptions of religion has been detected in other authors, the fundamentally religious ideal identified by Jonathan Z. Smith as another legacy of Protestantism[65] also underpins Staal's epistemology at a deeper level. Staal argues that study of Buddhism has proceeded upon the unproven assumption that 'Buddhism is a religion, and that there is therefore a certain unity to the subject.' Because 'the concept of religion is not easily applicable to Buddhism ... [t]hat unity is therefore imposed from the outside and *a priori* ... [f]or scholarship to be adequate, it should not be based upon such assumptions. Only if we abandon them are we in a position to discover whether, and to what extent, such a unity may in fact exist.'[66] The idea of such a position, free of all assumptions, from which we can discover whether or not Buddhism is a unified entity is not only, as many Buddhists would surely recognize, illusory but also, as Smith argues, an essentially religious ideal. An indication that Staal thinks such a position is attainable may be gained from the confidence with which he feels able to distinguish 'genuine manifestations' of Buddhism, from other 'representations of Buddhism by Asian Buddhists'.[67] The assumption that ritual is a more fundamental category than religion may lead to the emergence of concepts different from (although comparable to) those we presently use to denote different religions. Nevertheless the impossibility of occupying a position free of

[64] Staal 1989: 401.

[65] See above, p.29.

[66] Staal 1989: 410.

[67] Staal 1989: 402.

all assumptions means that whatever unity such concepts might represent would no more have a definite ontological status than that represented by the terms with which we denote the collections of beliefs and practices which we call religions. The 'unity' of Buddhism does not exist, except in, and for the purposes of, analysis, whether that analysis chooses religion – no longer defined simply as the possession of a god, founder, and text – or ritual as its key.

Staal states that '[t]he unities presumed to cover early and late Buddhism, or Indian, or Chinese, and other forms of Buddhism, are functions of the same unproven assumption'[68] that Buddhism is a religion and thus a unity. Fitzgerald makes a similar point with respect to Ambedkar Buddhists in Maharashtra, Theravāda Buddhists in other parts of South Asia and Japanese Buddhists, arguing that each inhabit 'a significantly different semantic universe' and that the idea that 'these are three different manifestations of one essence' or that 'Buddhism is an entity with an essence that can be described and listed with other such entities, the Religions or the world religions, can be described as an essentialist fallacy'. While 'historical and philosophical links between these different culturally situated institutions' exist

> In the Maharashtrian context, it is extremely difficult to separate out some putative Buddhism from the Buddhist (formerly Mahar) caste and thus from the complex ideology of caste institutions. In the Japanese context, it is difficult to conceive of 'Buddhism' as distinct from other indigenous cultural institutions, or from a dominant system of Japanese values in particular.[69]

Fitzgerald makes the same claim in respect of Hinduism. The 'analytical centre of gravity of Hinduism' is fundamentally a conception of ritual order or hierarchy, 'and there is a strong case for claiming that it is coterminous with traditional Indian culture and with the caste system as a peculiarly Indian phenomenon'.[70] Even the more universalistic sectarian Hindu movements remain 'rooted' in this 'ideologically defined context' such that Fitzgerald asks in what sense ISKCON at Bhaktivedanta Manor in southern England is the same religion as ISKCON in California or Bengal: 'It seems to be the same question essentially as "What is Christianity, or any other example of 'a religion', abstracted from a particular sociological context? ... That these are variants of the same reality is a theological claim, made by sociologically specific groups of people. This claim is part of the object of non-theological observation; it should not be one of its basic assumptions'.[71]

[68] Staal 1989: 410.
[69] Fitzgerald 2000a: 26–27.
[70] Fitzgerald 1990: 102.
[71] Fitzgerald 1990: 115.

Fitzgerald suggests that the methodological priority ought then to be the study of 'one or other or all of these institutions in their actual context'[72]:

> we first have to understand the totality within which such institutions are established. We might then hazard a series of abstractions for comparative purposes, without making the mistake of attributing these abstractions and the meaning we give to them to anybody but ourselves.[73]

Fitzgerald argues that scholars whose study of Hinduism is guided by the 'essentially theological concept' of a religion as an entity transcending particular social groups, 'cut across the data in the wrong places' with the result that '[v]irtually everything that sociology has revealed about Hinduism is ignored'[74].

Fitzgerald reports that in his own study of Ambedkar Buddhism he 'found the concept of religion unhelpful and instead ... analyzed it in terms of the concepts ritual, politics and soteriology'.[75] Ritual is here defined by Fitzgerald to be essentially the same 'concept of hierarchical order' he identifies elsewhere as the 'analytical centre of gravity' of Hinduism. While elements of the practice of this ritual order, for example practising untouchability against other untouchable castes or the worship of the Buddha and Ambedkar as though they were Hindu gods, are incompatible with Ambedkar's teaching they are nevertheless 'to some variable degree part of the actual situation and identity of Buddhists'.[76] Ambedkar Buddhists are more clearly demarcated from others who share their ritual practices by their politics, which departs from the traditional legitimation of power mediated by ritual status, and by their soteriology, which though often reinterpreted as 'liberation from inequality and exploitation' has 'an important spiritual or transcendental element as well ... pursued through reading Buddhist texts, practicing meditation, and going on retreats'.[77] These three concepts allow greater analytical clarity, Fitzgerald argues, than religion, which covers and therefore obscures the relations between ritual, politics and soteriology. Religion generates a lack of clarity because it 'does not effectively demarcate any *nonreligious* institutions.[78]

[72] Fitzgerald 2000a: 27.
[73] Fitzgerald 1990: 108.
[74] Fitzgerald 1990: 111; 2000a: 136.
[75] Fitzgerald 2000a: 121.
[76] Fitzgerald 2000a: 130.
[77] Fitzgerald 2000b: 5.
[78] Fitzgerald 2000b: 1; cf Fitzgerald 2000a: 134–135. Fitzgerald adds 'nor does it clarify the sense in which Buddhists, Christians, Jainas, Muslims, or Sikhs constitute separate minorities in India' and explains that because religion is used to cover ritual principles centered on caste and hierarchy which are shared by non-Hindu groups in India it conceals the distinctiveness which analysis of them as different soteriologies would reveal.

The issue is whether or not "religion" does genuinely pick out a distinctive set of institutions that demarcate it from other institutions or whether we need concepts that can pick out finer distinctions that pervade many or most institutions, such as the ritual, the soteriological, and the political.[79]

So much, states Fitzgerald, 'can be, and is, called religion in India that the term picks out nothing distinctive'.[80] For the term to be a useful analytical category it must be possible to state 'what counts as religion and what counts as non-religion'.[81] However, as Fitzgerald states elsewhere, when 'we talk about a religion ... we are not talking about some real type of object'[82] or essence but are rather making an abstraction, usually for the purposes of comparison. He is wrong to suggest that such an abstraction is only useful if it is infallibly able to demarcate the religious from the non-religious.[83] It would only be possible for the concept to allow such precise demarcation, to identify what is religion and what non-religion, if religion were indeed a real object, an essence whose manifestations could be identified.

The claim that religion is such an essence, and that the boundaries between the religious and the non-religious can be drawn with such precision is, as Fitzgerald suggests, a religious or theological claim.[84] In discussing precisely the same issue of caste observances among different groups in India, Roberto Nobili made the claim – crucial for his theological argument – that 'there is a norm by which we can distinguish between social actions and the purely religious'.[85] Such a claim has no place in a non-theological study of religion.[86] Again, as Fitzgerald states when 'we talk about a religion ... we are not talking about some real type of object that is only contingently associated with any empirical social group, and which can be studied in its own right' but are rather 'using an analytical

[79] Fitzgerald 2000a: 149.
[80] Fitzgerald 2000a: 149.
[81] Fitzgerald 2000a: 153.
[82] Fitzgerald 1990: 109.
[83] Neither can the ritual, political or soteriological always be precisely demarcated from other categories of analysis. Fitzgerald notes that in Maharashtra 'some forms of exchange today are descended from the old balutedari system, which was very much embedded in ritual status' (Fitzgerald 2000a: 122), thus ritual is to some degree confounded with economics. Likewise some elements of what Fitzgerald categorizes as soteriology can surely also be analysed as either ritual or politics.
[84] Fitzgerald argues that this sense of religion as a substantial entity independent of any particular social group is in fact a theological conception, allied to the idea of God, 'who transcends all particular social groups and who offers salvation to all individuals everywhere'. Fitzgerald 1990: 109.
[85] Nobili 1971: 155. See below, p. 60f.
[86] Cf. McCutcheon's contention that 'the category of religion is a conceptual tool and ought not to be confused with an ontological category actually existing in reality' McCutcheon 1997: viii.

category'. He goes on, however, to state that this analytical category 'corresponds to what some religious ideologies proclaim themselves to be'.[87] This is only true if we continue to take a religion to be some kind of substantial entity which exists as a real object somehow transcending particular societies. If instead religion is regarded as *one* of a series of abstractions we might hazard for the purpose of comparison of different societies (without, as Fitzgerald states, making the mistake of attributing the abstraction and the meaning given to it to anyone else), there is no reason to regard 'religion' as a theological category with no place in an avowedly non-theological discipline, *or* to expect the category to be able infallibly to discriminate between religious and non-religious phenomena. To think that because the concept of religion emerged from theological claims about the unity of a religion (or the object of that religion) the concept remains theological is to commit the genetic fallacy. Our usage of it clearly no longer corresponds to what religious ideologies proclaim themselves to be. Fitzgerald argues that if we take the examples of Christianity in Salt Lake City and in Tamil Nadu, the claim 'that these are variants of the same reality is a theological claim, made by sociologically specific groups of people. This claim is part of the object of non-theological observation; it should not be one of its basic assumptions.'[88] It is at least as likely that it would be *denied* on theological grounds, that two versions of Christianity (let alone, say, Christianity and Hinduism in Tamil Nadu) were variants of the same reality, where non-theological scholars of religion would want to assert that these were variants of the same reality, not in the sense of being both manifestations of a single essence, but in the sense that both could be understood better by being considered within a single analytical category. That category *need* not be 'religion' but there is no reason why it should not be.

'Hinduism' and 'what has come to be called Hinduism'

Donald S. Lopez suggests 'one of the ways that scholars of Hinduism may be distinguished from experts on other religions at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion is by their overdeveloped pectoral muscles, grown large from tracing quotation marks in the air whenever they have mentioned "Hinduism" over the past ten years.'[89] The gesture has several oral analogues, usually of the form 'what has come to be called Hinduism', or 'what Western scholars have designated by the term Hinduism'. What is signified with such gestures and tics is

[87] Fitzgerald 1990: 109.
[88] Fitzgerald 1990: 115.
[89] Lopez 2000: 832.

nevertheless usually identical with what the term Hinduism has been taken to signify from its earliest use.[90] H. H. Wilson, in an essay first published in 1828, notes that '[t]he Hindu religion is a term, that has been hitherto employed in a collective sense, to designate a faith and worship of an almost endlessly diversified description.'[91] Having drawn attention to the constructed nature of the term, such physical and verbal gestures serve to dissociate the speaker from the processes of selection by which the term's meaning is constituted, while allowing her or him to retain the analytical function for which the term was coined. This procedure threatens to reverse recent advances in our understanding of the proper status of key concepts in the academic study of religion, not only of Hinduism but of religion itself. Dissociating oneself from the inevitable process of selection which underlies our use of this or any other general term (for example, by referring to 'what has come to be called Hinduism') without specifying an alternative basis for selection merely perpetuates the confusion between conceptual and ontological categories.

It is clear that whatever conception of Hinduism (or any other religion) emerges from such a process of selection is the result of decisions that are inevitably influenced by the purposes and pre-conceptions of the analyst. It is not a representation of what Hinduism 'really' is. Nor need it aspire to be a mirror image of Hindu self-perception, not least because any such self-perception (and these would be legion, not just in the case of Hinduism) would be equally dependent on a specific set of purposes and pre-conceptions. The representation of Indian religions which emerged in the works of European writers between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries was the result of just such a decision-making process. The usefulness of such representations will depend upon the extent to which we share their purposes.

What the scholarly vocabulary of religion provides is one out of a number of possible ways of cutting across the available data. Provided we remain self-conscious about our use of such a vocabulary, and refrain from postulating entities where we have only abstractions and representations, there is no reason why such a vocabulary should not continue to be used. This is not to say that this is the only, or even the best, way of making a selection of data. However, as Chidester – having reviewed the history of their production and reproduction as contested terms – writes, 'we might happily abandon *religion* and *religions* as terms of analysis if we were not, as a result of that very history, stuck with them. They

[90] Cf. Lorenzen's comment that 'most scholars of Indian religions who have not directly addressed this question – and even several who claim that Hinduism is a modern construction – continue to write about Hinduism as if it in fact existed many centuries earlier' (Lorenzen 1999: 631).

[91] Wilson 1846: 1.

adhere to our attempts to think about identity and difference in the world.'[92] The recovery of that history in the work of several writers, means that these terms can no longer be used innocently. Precisely because it ought now to be impossible to use concepts such as 'religion' and 'Hinduism' without being aware that in doing so one is applying a theoretical framework to the world, the use of such terms is less likely to result in the unconscious imposition of such a framework than the use of some new coinage, whose theory-laden status may initially be obscured by its novelty. Catherine Bell writes 'That we construct "religion" and "science" [and, one might add, "Hinduism"] is not the main problem; that we forget we have constructed them in our own image – that is a problem.'[93] If so, then not only is there no reason to abandon the use of 'religion', but there is good reason to retain it.

There is therefore no final answer to the question: Is Hinduism a religion or not? 'Hinduism' has no ontological status, it is not an entity. It is rather a tool of analysis. The question ought therefore to be: How far is it profitable to analyse Hinduism as a religion? There can be no doubt that at times Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism, or ritual, politics and soteriology will be more profitable concepts for analysis. But we should never forget that these also are abstractions, and that they are first of all *our* abstractions (even if they are also shared by Hindus). They may, or may not, pre-exist in the consciousness of those studied, or be taken up later (as was the case with some neo-Hindu groups). The intuitive appropriateness of these abstractions is the result of our pre-conception of religion, which despite its emergence in the modern West ought no longer to be dominated by the idea of Christianity as *the* paradigm of what a religion is. That the modern academic concept of religion emerged in the West does not by itself mean that the concept is inapplicable in other cultures, any more than it means that religion did not exist in the West prior to the articulation of the modern sense of religion.[94]

The idea that some abstractions 'distort' the reality of Hindu religious belief and practice and others do not is an illusion. No view of Hinduism that is not 'distorted' by any concepts whatsoever is available to us. Any abstractions will to some extent colour our view of Hinduism, all will have their specific limitations and allow us to see different truths about Hinduism. Although a primary thesis of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* was that 'Islam *has* been fundamentally misrepresented in the West' he says that

[92] Chidester 1996: 259.

[93] Bell 1996: 188.

[94] Cf. Ninian Smart's comment on the term 'gamesmanship' cited below, p.165.

the real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is *eo ipso* implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth', which is itself a representation.[95]

Commenting upon this Brian K. Smith has written: 'This forceful enunciation of the postmodernist predicament would seem to close the door definitively on any subsequent re-envisioning of "the Orient", "India", or "Hinduism" that poses as being "truer" or "more accurate" than prior ones. It would also seem to problematize the grounds on which criticism of other constructions, past or present, can proceed.' He suggests that one 'possible form of evaluation is whether one's study is sufficiently nuanced to allow for the representational capabilities of the others whom one, inevitably, is in the process of representing.'[96] In the remaining chapters it will be argued that several influential early European works on Hinduism were dependent upon, and reflected the representational capabilities of those who were represented,[97] and hence were appropriately nuanced in the sense that Smith suggests our representations ought to be, and certainly more nuanced than recent critiques of such works have allowed. The taxonomy of Indian religions which emerged from such works is therefore a useful taxonomy, although this does not exclude the possibility of other useful taxonomies.

[95] Said 1991: 272.
[96] Smith 1996b: 366.
[97] Lorenzen argues that the similarity in early European accounts 'whatever the language or period in which they were written, and whether or not they are likely to have mutually influenced each other ... suggests that the European writers were in fact "constructing" Hinduism directly on the basis of what they observed and what they were told by their native informants. These informants were in turn simply summarizing a construction of Hinduism that already existed in their own collective consciousness.' (Lorenzen 1999: 646).

3

Indian Religions in Early Seventeenth-Century European Thought

Seventeenth-century European encyclopaedic works on the religions of the world typically dealt with their subject matter within a fourfold categorial scheme. In addition to Christianity, there were separate categories for Judaism and for Islam (i. e. 'Mahumetanisme', 'Saracenicall' or 'Moorish' religion etc.), religions long known to western writers.[1] The fourth category was a vague entity referred to as 'Heathenism', 'Paganism', 'Superstition', 'Gentilism' or 'Idolatry', these terms being used more or less interchangeably. This type of classification is set out explicitly in works such as Edward Brerewood's *Enquiries touching the Diversity of Languages and Religions through the Chiefe Parts of the World* (1614), Alexander Ross's *Pansebeia: or, a view of all religions in the world* (1653) and Richard Baxter's *The Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667).[2] In the fourth category was placed virtually any form of religion not obviously Jewish, Christian or Islamic, sometimes including the dead religions of Europe's past. Where this category was subdivided, it was on a geographical basis, and it is here that the religions of India were to be found. While the religion of the ancient Indians is treated in these works as a unitary entity, contemporary Indian religion is discussed under the rubric of the religions of the inhabitants of particular regions of India. Thus Ross, following his section on the 'religion of the ancient Indians', discusses separately the religions of Siam, Pegu (Burma), Bengala, Magor, Cambaia (Gujarat), Goa, Malabar, Narsingar and Bisnagar (Vijayanagara), Japon, the Philippiana Islands, Sumatra and Zeilan (Ceylon).[3] This treatment arises in part from the nature of the sources on which the compilers of these works relied.

For his account of religion in India Ross, whose work was first published in 1653, did not use the most recently-published works on

[1] For examples see Pailin 1984, chapter V 'The treatment of Judaism' and chapter VI 'The treatment of Islam.'
[2] Brerewood writes: 'There are foure sorts or sects of Religion, observed in the sundrie regions of the World. Namely, Idolatrie, Mahumetanisme, Judaisme and Christianity.' (Brerewood 1614: 79. Cf. Baxter 1667: 198). Ross's categories diverge slightly from those of Brerewood and Baxter. Ross states that of all the religions in the world some 'are meerly Heathenish, some Jewish, some meerly Christian, some mixed, either of all, or some of these'. So in the fourth category we find 'Mahometanism' as a mixture of Judaism, 'Gentilism', and the Christian heresy 'Arrianism'. Ross 1696: 363.
[3] Ross 1696: Contents.

India such as Henry Lord's *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects* (1630) or Abraham Roger's *De Open-Deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom* (1651). Instead Ross relied upon the earlier works of another Englishman, Samuel Purchas, and another Dutchman, Jan Huygen van Linschoten, together with the reports of Portuguese travellers and traders. Although Purchas was not a traveller, his work was a compilation of traveller's tales; the main source of information concerning the religions of the inhabitants of India in *Purchas His Pilgrimes, or Hakluytus Posthumus* is the 1615 voyage to India of Edward Terry. Linschoten travelled throughout the region then known as "the East Indies" between 1583 and 1589, publishing an account of his voyages in 1596. The structure of encyclopaedic works like Ross's is partly dictated by the use of traveller's accounts, rather than the works of Lord and Roger which are descriptions of the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of one particular geographical region.

The memoirs of voyages used by compilers like Ross typically proceed sequentially from one region to another, describing the religion of the region along with the topography, trade, rulers and anything else thought noteworthy. Although produced in the late sixteenth century, at a time when, according to Michael Biggs, a new and characteristically modern cartographical mode of representation had begun to emerge, Linschoten's work is closer to the genre of medieval itineraries which recorded 'the route and time taken to travel between places – without any attempt to indicate their relative position.'[4] So Linschoten treats the religion of 'the Heathens, Indians and other strangers dwelling in Goa' separately from that of 'the Gusurates, and Banianes of Cambaia' or 'the Canaras and Decanijns'.[5] While both Linschoten and Ross, who perpetuated and extended Linschoten's geographical classification, were aware of, or at least suspected, that there was some relationship between these groups, they had no clear idea of that relationship. For Linschoten the 'Idolatrie, ceremonies, and superstitions [of the 'Malabares'] are like the other heathens [in India]'[6] while for Ross the religion of Japan is 'the same Gentilism that is professed in the rest of the Indies, with some variation of ceremonies.'[7] What both lacked, we might say, was a modern map – a conceptual framework which would allow them to clarify the relationship between these groups by indicating their position relative to one another.

By contrast to contemporary religions of India, the religion of 'the ancient people of India' is treated as a unity, largely because it is described on the basis of different sources. The other primary source of

[4] Biggs 1999: 377.
[5] Linschoten 1885: 222.
[6] Linschoten 1885: 278.
[7] Ross 1696: 63.

information about India and its religions for the earliest modern writers on religions were the reports of Western antiquity, and as a source for the religion of the ancient Indians in particular these classical reports retained their importance despite the proliferation of travel literature from the sixteenth century onwards. For prior to gaining access to ancient Indian texts, and with archaeology still in its infancy, seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century accounts of ancient Indian religion continue to be drawn almost exclusively from western classical sources. In his section entitled 'Of India in general and of the ancient Rites there observed', Purchas describes 'the ancient People of India' on the authority of western classical authors including Strabo, Megasthenes, and Arrian. For Ross the classical and contemporary accounts are sufficiently similar for him to identify the contemporary 'Bramanes' as 'the successours of the old Brachmanes' reported by the Greeks,[8] but he still separates the religion of contemporary inhabitants of the different regions of India from the 'religion of the ancient Indians' and from each other. Each comprised a subdivision of the category of 'Heathenism'.

While the fourfold classification of the world's religions was to persist in some European works for at least another two and a half centuries,[9] already in the seventeenth century it had begun to be undermined by the appearance of more specialized works on the religions in the fourth category and it was quickly abandoned by the authors of these works. Such works suggested both that some of the systems of religious beliefs and practices that were lumped together in this category were at least as different from each other as they were from, say, Islam, and that others which had been separated on the basis of geography were in fact better thought of as one religion. We can see this on an individual level in the writings of William Carey. As late as 1792 (but before he went to India) Carey still identifies four types of religion: 'Christian, Jewish, Mahometan and Pagan.'[10] However, once Carey was in India he soon discarded the fourfold classification.[11] While the fourfold classification persisted in some European works until long into the nineteenth century, in works on Indian religions the beginnings of the process by which it

[8] Ross 1696: 61.
[9] Jonathan Z. Smith cites several examples of the fourfold categorization in nineteenth-century book titles; the latest is Vincent Milner, *Religious Denominations of the World: Comprising a General View of the Origin, History and Condition of the Various Sects of Christians, the Jews, and Mahometans, As Well as the Pagan Forms of Religion Existing in the Different Countries of the Earth* (1872). Smith 1998: 275.
[10] Carey 1991: 64.
[11] 'Hindooism' is mentioned in the *Circular Letters of the Serampore Mission* VIII (May 1815): 100. The Baptist missions had by this time also encountered Parsis, Jains and Buddhists. See Potts 1967: 39.

came to be replaced can be traced back to the early decades of the seventeenth century.

The concept of Hinduism

Although the term 'Hindooism' itself is not used until late in the eighteenth century,[12] it will here be argued that it appears then not as the beginning but as the culmination of a process of concept-formation which had been underway for an extended period. In 1616, Terry had contrasted the 'notorious Idolaters, called in generall Hindoos' with the 'Mahometans' with whom they have been mixed 'ever since they were subdued by Tamberlaine'.[13] In the same year, the term '*Bramanismo*' is used in a treatise on Hinduism in Portuguese by Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso.[14] '*Gentilisme*' is used in a 1722 letter in French from Etienne le Gac,[15] and 'Gentooism' on the spine of a 1779 work in English by Jonathan Zephaniah Holwell.[16] Each of these concepts, and others such as 'the Banian religion', contributed to the construction of a concept of a single pan-Indian Hindu religious tradition which is first established in the works of the eighteenth-century French Jesuits on 'the system of religion recognized among the Indians'.[17] The process by which this

[12] It was in use by the 1780s. Charles Grant uses the term, without any sign that it is a neologism, in a letter to John Thomas written in the early months of 1787: 'In case of converting any of the Natives, as soon as they renounce Hindooism, they must suffer a dreadful excommunication in civil life, unless they are under the immediate protection of the English.' Quoted in Henry Morris, *The Life of Charles Grant*, London: John Murray, 1904: 105. Grant also uses the term in his 'Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals, and on the means of Improving It. Written chiefly in the year 1792.' *Parliamentary Papers*, 1812–13, X, Paper 282: 1–112. I am grateful to Geoffrey Oddie for drawing my attention to Grant's use of the term.

[13] Edward Terry, *A Relation of a Voyage to the Easterne India* in Purchas 1905, vol. 9: 29.

[14] Discussed below, p.63.

[15] Gobien *et al.* 1702–1776, vol. XVI (1724): 294.

[16] The spine of the Cambridge University Library copy of Holwell 1779 is marked 'Holwell's Gentooism'. The French 'Gentil' and the English 'Gentoo' (or, rarely, 'Gentile') were widely used to the end of the eighteenth century to refer to the non-Muslim population of India. Both are corruptions of the Portuguese *gentio*, which in turn derives from the Latin *gentilis*. (Yule and Burnell 1996, and *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) *s. v.* 'Gentoo'.)

[17] 'le systême de Religion reçu parmi les Indiens' Jean Venant Bouchet à M. l'ancien Evêque d'Avranches. Gobien *et al.* 1702–1776, vol. IX (1730): 5. The published letter is undated but it is placed before the letters from 1709 in a later edition of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* which reorganized the letters chronologically within the regions of Asia. See *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangeres. Nouvelle*

concept came to be constructed will be traced through an examination of four works or collections of works by English, Dutch, German and French authors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Henry Lord's *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies* (1630), Abraham Roger's *De Open-Deure tot het verborgen Heydendom* (1651), the works of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Johann Ernst Gründler of the Danish-Halle mission at Tranquebar from the first two decades of the eighteenth century and the works of the Jesuits of the Carnatic mission from the end of the seventeenth century to 1776.[18]

The examination of these works provides a coverage of early European accounts of Indian religions that is both linguistically and chronologically wide-ranging. There are, however, many other works that might have been considered, both in other languages and in other periods, among them those of Jacobo Fenicio, Roberto Nobili, Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso, Philip Baldaeus, Jean-Jacques Tessier de Quéralay, Thomas de Poitiers, Jonathan Zephaniah Holwell, Alexander Dow, Charles Wilkins, William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Horace Hayman Wilson.[19] Some of these works will be referred to where appropriate; those that will be examined in detail have been chosen above all for the importance of the contribution they made to the formation of the concept of Hinduism. This in turn has meant restricting consideration to works that were either published (Lord, Roger, some of the works of the Tranquebar and Carnatic missions), or widely circulated in manuscript (the major works of Ziegenbalg, some works of Jean-Venant Bouchet and Gaston-Laurent Cœurdoux) before 1780.

Although it will be stressed that the concept of Hinduism is the result of a process of development, it is not suggested that this was a single, continuous process. Lord, Roger and Ziegenbalg worked to a very large extent in isolation from other European works on Hinduism, and each stresses the originality of his work. However, two tendencies which together undermined the fourth category ('heathenism') of the fourfold classification are evident in differing degrees in these writers. The first is the identification of difference and plurality in the religious adherence of Indians; where evidence of recognition of such difference appears in their

édition. Mémoires des Indes. A Paris, Chez J. G. Merigot le jeune, Libraire, Quai des Augustins, au coin de la rue Pavée, 1781, vol. XI.

[18] 1776 marks both the publication of the final volume of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* and the likely compilation of Cœurdoux's *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens*. See Chapter 7.

[19] Among other languages, there were important works in Portuguese and Latin. Although Indian religions were of course described in sixteenth-century works and in many nineteenth-century works, it was the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which saw the emergence of the concept of Hinduism as a unified pan-Indian tradition. For further details of the works of the authors listed, see the first section of the bibliography.

works it will be noted. The second is the identification of similarity and unity in religious belief and practice which, however, is not extended to all of India in the earliest of these writers. The first led to the abandonment of 'heathenism' as a category, the second to the formation of 'Hinduism' as the first of the major categories with which 'heathenism' was eventually replaced. In the case of the French Jesuits these tendencies were reinforced by their participation in a network of communication about Indian traditions which extended spatially across India (and to the learned institutions of Europe) and temporally across the whole of the period considered here: from the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Hinduism was known only from the reports of the ancients or of travellers like Linschoten, to the late eighteenth century, when the term 'Hinduism' was coined to represent a new object of European knowledge.

Roberto Nobili

Before turning to the first of the four groups of works which shaped the European conception of Hinduism, we will begin with one of the earliest and probably the greatest of the Jesuit writers on the religions of India, Roberto Nobili (1577–1656).[20] Although Nobili's knowledge of Indian languages and of Hindu religious beliefs and practices certainly surpassed that of the other seventeenth-century writers to be considered here, his treatises on Indian religion, such as the *Narratio Fundamentorum*[21] and the *Informatio*,[22] were not published.[23] The importance of his works for our purposes lies not so much in their direct contribution to European

[20] Josef Wicki suggests that although the form 'Roberto de Nobili' has become familiar, he usually referred to himself as Nobili, and as 'de Nobili' only when writing in Latin (cf. Neill 1984: 484).

[21] *Narratio Fundamentorum quibus Madurensis Missionis Institutum caeptum est et hucusque consisit* [*An exposition of the basic principles which inspired the founding of the Madurai Mission and continue to guide it.* 1619], ed. S. Rajamanickam, trans. J. Pujo, *Adaptation*. Palayamkottai: De Nobili Research Institute, 1971. All quotations in English from this work are from the translation of J. Pujo in Rajamanickam's bilingual edition.

[22] *Informatio de quibusdam moribus nationis indicae* [*Information concerning certain Indian customs.* 1613]. ed. S. Rajamanickam, trans. Peter Leonard, *Roberto de Nobili on Indian Customs*. Palayamkottai: De Nobili Research Institute, 1972. A revised version of the English translation appeared in Nobili 2000. All quotations from this work are from the translation of Peter Leonard in Rajamanickam's 1972 bilingual edition.

[23] They were, however, copied and circulated in Rome and India by his supporters in the rites debate and their most significant influence was in shaping later Jesuit approaches to Hinduism. The Jesuits of the Carnatic Mission not only adopted Nobili's strategy of adaptation, with important consequences for their knowledge of Hinduism, but they would also have known Nobili's treatises in defence of his method. See below, Chapter 7.

conceptions of Hinduism, but in their conclusive demonstration that, *pace* Stietencron, not all early European missionaries in India treated Hinduism as a single religion and that, at least in Nobili's case, his Christian worldview predisposed him to argue precisely the opposite. Not only does Nobili have no conception of Hinduism as a pan-Indian religion, he explicitly asserts that the non-Muslim inhabitants of India have several different religions. Examination of Nobili's works will also serve to demonstrate that whatever preconceptions of Indian religions Europeans brought to India with them, there were at least some writers who were forced by their encounter with Indian religious beliefs and practices to abandon their preconceptions. Although the concept of a unified Hindu religious tradition does eventually emerge, this happens only as the result of a sustained study of those religions. The first response of authors such as Nobili, Lord and others was to identify a *plurality* of religions in India, which undermined the conventional fourfold categorial scheme.

Nobili's works were part of a wave of Jesuit reports on Hinduism in the first decades of the seventeenth century.[24] Joan-Pau Rubiés argues that the motivation for these works lay in a crisis of missionary methods: before 1580, he writes, 'clerical attitudes of utter and offensive contempt' produced 'a general consensus among clerical writers to ignore gentile mythology' while at the same time 'there was no real room for a lay discourse on gentile religion to challenge the clerical monopoly'.[25] The crisis arose because the missions in India, China and Japan were not operating under the same degree of imperial protection as those in the New World and faced the problem of how to evangelize free nations. Although tolerated at the courts of Akbar in the north and Venkata II in the south, the missionaries were disappointed by the lack of conversions. In response to this problem the Jesuits developed the innovative strategy of 'accommodation' or 'adaptation' to Indian social customs and as a consequence engaged in the serious study of Indian religion required for both the practice and the defence of the strategy. Thus Nobili's works on Hinduism were not written to inform Europe about the *religions* of India,[26] except insofar as such knowledge served the main purpose of these works, which was to justify the practice of 'accommodation' or 'adaptation' in the Madurai mission from 1606. Nobili, following to some extent the principles of the Jesuit mission in China of Matteo Ricci, allowed Brahman converts to continue in certain practices which, he

[24] For a brief description of other works besides those discussed here, see Rubiés 2000: 315–6. Rubiés has also provided a more detailed account of one of these works, Antonio Rubino's *Relatione d'alchune cose principali del regno de Bisnagà* (1608) (Rubiés 2001).

[25] Rubiés 2000: 313.

[26] The plural is used advisedly, see below, p.62.

argued, were only signs of 'a certain social and political rank', and not implicated in 'idolatry'.[27]

The accommodation strategy had a range of implications: for the missionaries it meant adopting the dress and lifestyle of a *sannyāsin* and for converts it meant toleration of certain practices which, it was argued, had social and not only religious significance, and which, purged of their superstitious meaning, could be allowed within the Christian community in order to reduce the resistance of the higher classes to conversion. The practices included wearing the brahmanic thread and the *kudumi* (tuft of hair), the use of sandal paste, certain ablutions, and the use by Hindu women of the *tāli*, a necklace, instead of a ring as a sign of marriage. In language, accommodation meant the Christianization and use of terms such as *piracādam*, *kōvil* and even *pūjai* rejected by earlier missionaries such as Henrique Henriques because of their associations with Hinduism.[28] While study of Indian vernaculars had always been a part of missionary strategy, for Nobili at least, accommodation required also the serious study of Hindu thought, particularly Vedānta.

As is well known, Nobili's strategy provoked what became known as the 'Malabar rites' controversy.[29] Nobili was first denounced in 1610 by Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso, a man who – apart from the fact that he was also a Jesuit – could scarcely have been less like Nobili. In contrast to the young, intellectually gifted Italian nobleman who had been in India only five years and was engaged in an experimental mission to the high castes in Madurai, Fernandes was a Portuguese former soldier of modest background, who had entered the Society in India more than half a century previously. His education was limited and his work had been in the oldest fields of the Jesuit missions in Goa and the Fishery Coast before he had been sent to Madurai in 1595 to work among Paravas. As the dispute gathered momentum, Fernandes in 1616 wrote 'a synopsis of the ceremonies and way of life of the Brahmans' in answer to Nobili's works in defence of accommodation.[30] In it he notes that the way of life of the *sannyāsin*, as well as the ceremonies connected to the *kudumi*, the receiving of the sacred thread and weddings are prescribed in the Veda.[31] He argues that the status of the Brahmans, the guardians of the Veda, is therefore religious rather than social, and the distinctive marks of their

[27] Nobili 1971: 103.

[28] See Rajamanickam 1967.

[29] The issue was initially resolved in favour of Nobili by the 1623 bull of Gregory XV, *Romanae Sedis Antistes*, but the debate was revived in the first part of the next century and finally went against the Jesuits.

[30] *Sumário das serimónias e modo de proceder dos bramanes destas partes da India conforme a suas lleis e doutrinas dos seus doutores* (Fernandes 1973).

[31] Fernandes 1973: 2.

caste, including the thread and *kudumi* are religious and not merely social symbols.

Recent scholars have seen in the debate over accommodation between Nobili and Fernandes evidence of changes in European self-understanding underway in the period. For Iñes Županov, Nobili's aristocratic perspective is representative both of a humanist theological universalism which sought to uncover in the unknown analogies to the known and of a social position not threatened by this procedure. Fernandes, by contrast, represents for Županov a class of Europeans who, conscious of their social inferiority, found in the colonial enterprise the possibility of promotion through the discrimination of groups both different from and inferior to themselves. As a result they looked at India differently, in ways which for Županov anticipate contemporary emic and etic approaches in anthropology, Fernandes perceiving 'a classifiable diversity where Nobili saw basic uniformity.'[32] For Rubiés on the other hand while the dispute is at heart more theological than social or national, the question of the degree of overlap between cultural and religious identity is to be understood within European debates arising from the shattering of 'the quasi-identification of the civil and religious spheres which had sustained European self-confidence from the late Middle Ages to the Renaissance'.[33] He concludes: 'The debate about Indian religion was then really a debate about Christianity'.[34] Nevertheless Nobili's position in the accommodation debate – and by extension the debate about Christian religious and social identity – was dependent upon a conception of Hindu religious belief and practice as representing *different religions*.

For Nobili the thread and tuft of hair could be shown to be 'social, not religious insignia' because they were used by a plurality of sects who 'entirely disagree with one another in the question of religion' and therefore shared the thread and tuft as a mark of social rank and not religious adherence. Another Jesuit, Andrea Buccerio, had criticized an earlier treatise of Nobili on this point, arguing that the 'gentile sects, although contrary to one another, agree in one thing, and thus may have a common sign ... they all worship, not the true God, but the idols; hence, the string is the badge of idols in common.'[35] Nobili responds by asking, 'will the Christians, the Jews and the Turks ever choose a common emblem to signify that they all believe in one God? But whatever it will be elsewhere, among our gentiles, it is inconceivable; for their sects are so opposed to one another, that one sect will refuse to use a word, which

[32] Županov 1999: 116.

[33] Rubiés 2000: 317.

[34] Rubiés 2000: 340.

[35] Nobili 1971: 93.

perfectly applies to its divinity, if it is already used by another sect ... The conclusion is inevitable, that the string is not a religious emblem, for if it were, it would not be worn by sects so opposed to one another.[36]

In expounding his point, Nobili sets out an explicit account of three types of religious difference, identifying the kind of differences found between religions in India as the most fundamental of these. The first is variations in the mode of life of 'one and the same sect', for example Christian religious orders, who can of course use a common symbol because they are of one faith. The second is the type of difference between Catholics and 'heretics' who can nevertheless use the same symbols (baptism, the cross) because they are still called Christian. The third is the difference arising from worship of different gods.

> Now, it is concerning this last case that I said: it is morally impossible that these sects agree in a common religious symbol. For every act of worship is addressed to a determinate god; but if the god is indeterminate, that is, if it is not this or that god in particular, the act of worship will also be indeterminate, and consequently there cannot be any one definite religious emblem. *Now, it is this last kind of difference which is to be found among the sects of the people here.* Therefore the string cannot possibly be a symbol of divinity common to all.[37]

Thus when Nobili writes 'these people follow one common way of life, but many religions',[38] it is clear that he means that among Hindus who use the thread and tuft there are religious differences which go beyond the type of religious difference between Catholic and other Christians, and even beyond that between 'the Christians, the Jews and the Turks [who] ... all believe in one God'.[39] Nobili certainly perceived similarities among the Hindus, but the requirements of his theological argument on the accommodation strategy led him to insist on the fundamental nature of their religious differences.[40] Ironically then, insofar as his theological

[36] Nobili 1971: 95.

[37] Nobili 1971: 95–7 [emphasis added]

[38] 'hi populi unum habeant civilem cultum, religionem vero multiplicem' Nobili 1971: 112/113. Although the phrase translated by Pujo as 'one common way of life, but many religions' might also be translated as 'one common way of life, but a [single] manifold religion', it is clear from Nobili's discussion of religious difference among the Hindus that Pujo's interpretation of this sentence is to be preferred.

[39] Nobili 1971: 95. In contrast among the Hindus 'each sect adores a god peculiar to itself' (Nobili 1971: 97).

[40] Cf. Nobili's *Informatio de quibusdam moribus nationis indicae*: 'the sect of the Atheists cannot be said to be an unorthodox offspring of the sects of the idolaters ... these sects do not agree in any of their tenets, just as the sects of the Gnanis have nothing in common with these same idolaters' (Nobili 1972: 36–7). The 'Atheists' are Buddhists ('Bauddha matam or Nasticam'). In the *Narratio Fundamentorum* Nobili identifies the 'Gnani' as 'the Vedantam sect called Gnani or Spiritual men' (Nobili 1972: 117), however he places the 'Mayavadis', the 'Tadvavadis' and the 'Visnuvas' – the followers

preconceptions may be thought to have influenced Nobili's view of Hinduism – and his direct experience of and engagement with Indian religions was surely far more important – far from compelling him to a monolithic concept of Hinduism, they had in his case precisely the opposite effect. By contrast Fernandes, while he is far from having a conception of Hinduism as a single, pan-Indian religion, refers to the Hindus' beliefs and practices in a way which is at least suggestive of greater uniformity. In his *Sumário* Fernandes refers to the 'maquina do Bramanismo'.[41] Županov comments that '[by] the 16th [*sic*] century the term *máquina*, meaning primarily an invention and a tool, also meant a fabricated object, generally complex and used for transforming energy, a system. It was also used in readymade expressions such as a "war machine". It was probably all of these meanings – an invention, a fabrication (in a pejorative sense also), a system, and a war machine – that Fernandes, an ex-soldier, was hinting at.'[42] However although his use of 'Bramanismo' seems to indicate that Fernandes has some conception of the religion of the Brahmans as a unified system, he lists the different 'sects' among them,[43] and his conception is not yet of a pan-Indian tradition, if for no other reason than the modern concept of India was yet to be formed.[44] When Fernandes refers in the title of his *Sumário* to 'dos *bramanes* destas partes da India' it is likely that he means the Tamil-speaking region within 'the traditional region of the Indies, from the Indus to Indochina'.[45]

Unlike Fernandes' treatise which, Županov states, was 'more or less discarded as unlearned and of dubious authenticity'[46] by the Jesuit authorities in Rome, Nobili's works, although not published in his lifetime, were widely read within the Society. Thus although they did not contribute directly to European conceptions of Hinduism in the seventeenth century, they did contribute significantly to the understanding of Nobili's eighteenth-century successors, whose works reached a wide audience both within and beyond the Society.

of 'Ciancaraciarier' (Śaṅkarācārya), 'Madhuva' (Madhva) and Ramanuja (Rāmānuja) respectively – among the idolaters.

[41] Fernandes 1973: 3. In a *Reposta* to Nobili written at about the same time as the *Sumário*, Fernandes again uses the term 'Bramanismo' (Fernandes 1973: 301). This is, to my knowledge, by far the earliest use of a term which the *Oxford English Dictionary* does not attest in English until 1816.

[42] Županov 1999: 142.

[43] Fernandes 1973: 214–6.

[44] Cf. below, p. 162.

[45] Edney 1997: 4.

[46] Županov 1993: 138.

4

Henry Lord's Discovery of the Banians

Henry Lord's *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies* (1630), is the first work in English to deal with the religions of India neither as part of a general description of India in an account of a voyage, nor as part of a compendium of all religions in the world, but rather as an object of study in their own right.[1] It will be argued that as such it inaugurates, at least in English,[2] a new genre of writing.[3] Although Lord, like Nobili, begins from a recognition of the plurality of Indian religious adherence, and bases his account on his observations of a specific religious groups of particular regional importance, we also find in his work the first steps toward the construction of a more general category.

The term 'Banian', the primary category for the first of the sects or religions with which Lord's book is concerned, had been used by English writers such as Richard Hakluyt to mean simply 'one of the Indians inhabiting the countrey of Cambaia', that is, Gujarat.[4] However, the term

[1] The full title of Lord's work is *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies viz': The Sect of the Banians the Ancient Natiues of India and the Sect of the Persees the Ancient Inhabitants of Persia together with the Religion and Manners of each Sect. Collected into two Bookes by Henry Lord, sometimes resident in East India and preacher to the Honourable Company of Merchants trading thether*. It is divided into two parts, separately paginated but bound together in the 1630 edition. The first part is entitled 'A Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians' (although the running head of this part in the 1630 edition refers to 'the Banian Religion' rather than the 'Sect of the Banians'), and the second 'The Religion of the Persees'. Hereafter Lord's work and its constituent parts will be referred to as the *Display*, the *Discovery*, and *The Religion of the Persees*, respectively. Page references are to my edition of the text (Lord 1999).

[2] The works, in Portuguese and Latin, of Fernandes and Nobili also took Indian religions as their object of study, but their works served more overtly theological purposes. Jacobo Fenicio's *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Fenicio 1933) is more directly comparable to Lord's *Display*, but like the works of Fernandes and Nobili, it was not published until the twentieth century.

[3] Murr suggests that Abraham Roger's work inaugurates 'a new genre on the theme of the customs and the religion of the Indians ... which we may call proto-ethnology, that is to say an archaic discourse on a culture other than ours'. She gives no reason for excluding from such a genre Lord's work which, like Roger's, is 'founded on direct observations combined with the testimony of informants belonging to that culture itself.' ('un nouveau genre sur le thème des coutumes et de la religion des Indiens ... que nous pourrions appeler la proto-ethnologie, c'est-à-dire un discours archaïque sur une culture autre que la nôtre, fondé sur des observations directes conjugées avec les témoignages d'informateurs appartenant à cette culture même'. Murr 1987, II: 73.)

[4] The account of the 'Baniane' in Hakluyt is at third hand, being taken from an English merchant's report of a conversation he had with a Jewish merchant while travelling from Cyprus to Venice. The Jewish merchant had met a 'Baniane' at Ormus and had asked him

also had a wider application, being used by other early writers to refer 'to all Hindoos in Western India'.[5] Two senses are also apparent in Lord's work. In a broad sense, the Banians are the 'ancient natives of India', whom Lord describes as a 'people' or 'sect'.[6] However Lord also refers to a more specific group, 'those that are most properly called Banians'.[7] While the *Discovery* purports to be an account of the religion of the Banians in the wider sense, and was so treated by its first audience, it will be argued that Lord's primary sources were in fact members of this latter group, and that this group are to be identified as members of the *saṃpradāya* of Vallabhācārya. The ambiguity in Lord's use of the term 'Banian' allows him to present his account of 'the Banian religion, such as it is'[8] (i. e. his observations of the religion of a specific contemporary *saṃpradāya*) as the religion of 'the ancient natives of India'. Thus although Lord describes only the religion of a specific, albeit important, regional group, his work embodies a claim to a more comprehensive account of Indian religion. How Lord constructs this religion will be shown through an examination of the different categories he uses ('Banian', 'those that are most properly called Banians', 'Bramanes', 'more special Bramanes', 'Verteas', 'Gentiles').

Lord's life and Indian career

Little is known of Lord's career beyond what can be drawn from the *Display* itself and from the several brief comments concerning him in the Court Minutes of the East India Company. The *Dictionary of National Biography* identifies the author of the *Display* as a Henry Lord born in 1563, and educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford; this identification has been accepted by recent authors on Lord.[9] However, it was pointed out as long ago as 1937 that it is extremely unlikely that this is the same Henry Lord, as this would mean that he reached the age of sixty-one in the first year of his appointment to India. H. N. Randle calculates an average age of

'what he thought of God. He made answere, that they held no other god but the sun.' (Hakluyt 1599–1600, II: 310).

[5] *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), *s. v.* 'Banian'. The term subsequently came to denote a broker. It is used in this sense in 1672 by the Abbé Carré, to describe the Hindu traders who offered him their services in Chaul, south of Bombay (Carré 1947–1948, I: 187).

[6] Lord 1999: 9–10, 7. The 'Persees' are likewise identified in the title as 'the ancient inhabitants of Persia'.

[7] Lord 1999: 79.

[8] Lord 1999: 93.

[9] Lach and Van Kley 1993: 645; Firby 1988: 98.

thirty, on first appointment, for six preachers sent to India by the Company between the years of 1607 and 1621.[10]

The Court Minutes of the East India Company for the 7th of January 1624 record Lord offering himself to the Company as a chaplain:

Messrs. Lord, Benson and Morehouse present their services as preachers into the Indies, the Court having particular recommendation of Mr. Lord from Dean White, under whom he served as a curate, and from Mr. Shute, and others; entertained him at £60 per annum for five years; he is to give bond not to exercise any private trade, and appointed to preach on Sunday sennight at Great St Helen's, and to take for his text. "Have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather reprove them."[11]

Nine days later the minutes record the decision for Lord 'having given testimony of his sufficiency by a sermon preached at St. Helen's, to have him £20 to buy him books'.[12] Lord was initially appointed chaplain to the Company fleet under Weddell, with which he sailed in 1624. On arrival in India, Lord records, 'It happened that I was transferred from my charge aboard the ship, to reside in their prime factory in Gujarat, in a place called Surat.'[13]

Lord came close to resigning in the following year, as a result of 'some petty differences' between himself and the members of the Council of the factory. It seems that the disagreement arose over the way in which the factors at Surat dealt with one of their number, John Benthall, in the matter of his private trade. The President at Surat, Thomas Kerridge, 'refused Lord permission to go, saying "hee would not have it reported that a padre should forsake India for such slight matters".'[14] It is not clear whether Lord had strong feelings about the issue of the factors' private

[10] Randle 1937: 278. Randle (296) also cites the opinions of two Superintendents of Records at the India Office, W. T. Ottewill and Sir William Foster, that the Henry Lord born in 1563 was not the author of the *Display*. This Henry Lord (or Lorde) had probably been at Christ's College, Cambridge in 1578 before going to Oxford. Either he, or perhaps another Henry Lord who was at Jesus College in 1546, was vicar of Great Steeping in Lincolnshire from 1591, dying there in 1618. See Venn 1974–1978. Nora Firby defends the *DNB*'s identification, arguing that in view of the difficulties the Company had experienced with the behaviour of its chaplains it may well have preferred an older man. (Firby, personal communication).

[11] Sainsbury 1878: 229 (§ 384). Francis White, Dean of Carlisle 1622–26, afterwards successively Bishop of Carlisle, Norwich and Ely. 'Mr. Shute' is likely to have been Josiah Shute, Rector of St Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street 1611–1643, himself a chaplain to the EIC from 1632, although it could have been Nathaniel Shute, Rector of St Mildred, Poultry 1618–1638.

[12] Sainsbury 1878: 232 (§ 390). There is one further mention of Lord, concerning his request that 'he be allowed a boy to attend him the voyage'. Sainsbury 1878: 240 (§ 398).

[13] Lord, Introduction. This was a typical pattern; the first regular chaplain at Surat was appointed in 1658. See Rawlinson 1920: 123.

[14] Letter from Joseph Hopkinson at Ahmedabad to John Bangham at Lahore, 23 December, 1625 (O. C. 1214) in Foster 1909: 114.

trade, which was anything but a 'slight matter' in the eyes of the Company, or whether he simply took a principled stand on the Company's dealings with its employee.[15] Kerridge was, however, able to reconcile Lord with the other members of the Council, and Lord remained at Surat for the full length of his five-year appointment. We have no further record of Lord, or of his return to England.[16] However Lord's wish, expressed in the second of the letters of dedication, that the *Discovery* would have 'crossed the Æquinoctiall [equator] and tropics happily to come to your hands, amongst other news from the foreign parts of India' suggests that he remained in India after 1629, sending the manuscript back to London. By the time it was published in 1630, he appears to have returned to England,[17] as the engraved title page describes him as 'sometimes resident in East India.'[18]

The Banians

The term 'Banian' refers to the Vāṇiā mercantile caste, the Gujarati *vāṇiyo* being derived from the Sanskrit *vaṇij*, meaning merchant. The first European writer to use the term was the Portuguese Duarte Barbosa, who in 1516 distinguishes three races or classes of 'heathens': '*Resbutos* [Rājputs] ... the knights and wardens of the land ... *Baneanes*, who are great merchants and traders ... [and] *Bramenes*, who are priests among them and persons who manage and rule their houses of prayer and idol-worship.'[19] As noted, Richard Hakluyt first used the term in English in 1599, to mean 'one of the Indians inhabiting the countrey of Cambaia'.

The Vāṇiās were brokers, shopkeepers, money-changers and bankers, and members of this caste were active in ports all around the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The caste had both Hindu and Jain members and A. M. Shah notes nineteenth-century evidence that there was no 'restriction on inter-marriage between them, so that frequently husband and wife had different religious affiliations'.[20] The

[15] The Company's factors repeatedly complained about the failure of the Directors to understand their difficulties in the east. See Keay 1991: 122.

[16] Randle notes that this is because of the loss of the Court Minutes for July 1629 to July 1632 and of the Surat *Consultations* and *Letters* from 1628 to 1635. Randle 1937: 279.

[17] Although the Court Minutes for the year beginning July 1629 are no longer extant, it is known from other sources that two fleets from Surat reached London in 1630. Lord would probably have travelled with one of these. See Foster 1910: v,vii.

[18] Thus it is clear that Lord could not, as the introduction to the French translation of his work states, have based his work on eighteen years' experience in India.

[19] Barbosa 1918–1921, I: 110–111, 114–115.

[20] Shah and Desai 1988: 37.

Vāṇiās were one of the most numerous of the social groups in Surat and were divided into a number of sub-castes based on region of origin. The 1901 *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* reports that the 'great Vāṇiā community of Gujarat', forming 5.53 % of the Hindu population, was divided into twenty-three such sub-castes, ('classes' in the terminology of the *Gazetteer*). Each of these twenty-three sub-castes was divided into a 'Brahmanic' and a 'Shravak', i. e. Jain, section, although the line of separation was rigid only in south Gujarat. In general 'the Brahmanic and Shravak sections of the Vania community are knit together by social ties', and in north Gujarat, Kutch and Kathiavad, 'they generally eat together and sometimes intermarry.'[21] Of the Vāṇiās, more than 60 % are Jains, the remainder being Vaiṣṇavite Hindus. However, the Jains are concentrated in four of the twenty-three 'classes', the Porvads, the Shrimalis, the Ummads and the Osvals, the last two being 'wholly Shravaks.'[22] Among the other sub-castes, the Nāgar Vāṇiās are said to be 'Vallabhacharya Vaisnavs.'[23] Some of their number were very wealthy and the Vāṇiās were well known for substantial contributions to religious endowments. Jain inscriptions from the seventeenth century refer to Vāṇiā patronage of shrines built in Surat and elsewhere at this time.[24] By far the best-known member of the caste is M. K. Gandhi, who came from a Modh Vāṇiā caste in Saurashtra, whose life and thought illustrate the close connection between the Jain and Hindu sections of the Vāṇiā community.

A Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians: *structure*

The *Discovery* is nominally structured by the scheme of the four *yugas*. However, Lord devotes six chapters to the first, seven to the second, and only one each to the third and fourth. The first chapter deals with the creation, Lord's account of which is probably drawn, via an interpreter, from one of the Purāṇas.[25] The next four chapters describe how the four sons of Puruṣa and Prakṛti find wives appropriate to their natures. The names of the four (Brammon, Cuttery, Shuddery, Wyse, i. e. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Śūdra, Vaiṣya) indicate that Lord is drawing on some version of the myth of the origin of the four *varṇas*.[26] However, the accounts of the 'travails' of the four appear to be mainly Lord's own work, and show

[21] Campbell 1901: 69.
[22] Campbell 1901: 70.
[23] Campbell 1901: 73.
[24] Gokhale 1979: 135.
[25] See, for example, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Skandha III.
[26] There is some confusion in Lord's account of the *varṇas*, as suggested by the appearance of the Śūdras as the third caste, and the Vaiṣyas as the fourth. The reasons for this will be discussed below, p.78f.

evidence of a romantic imagination at work upon what may be local traditions.[27] Although the description in the sixth chapter of the moral decline and consummation of 'the first age of the world' in a great flood is superficially similar to the biblical account of the first judgement of humankind, Lord is not merely reading the biblical story into the Banians' tradition. It is clear from the inclusion of such details as 'the souls were lodged in the bosom of the Almighty' during the dissolution and reconstitution of the universe that Lord is attempting to be faithful to what he was told, even if he presents it in terms that would be more familiar to his readers than to his sources. Moreover, with the exception of his suggestion that the Banians' opinions concerning transmigration were 'derived from the philosopher Pythagoras, who in turn had received it from the Egyptians',[28] Lord does not indulge in the sort of speculation about the diffusion and corruption of religious truth that we find in other seventeenth-century accounts of religious diversity.[29] Rather, Lord presents the Banians as 'coining religion according to the mint of their own tradition'.[30] He rejects Guillaume Postel's genealogy of descent from Abraham and Keturah, and the explanation of 'Bramane' as an abbreviation of 'Abrahmanes', on the grounds that the Brahmans have never 'heard of Abraham, but affirm they receive this name of Bramanes from Brammon, which was the first that ever exercised their priestly function, as they find by record; or else from Bremaw'.[31]

The second group of seven chapters, which purport to describe 'the second age of the world', represent Lord's greatest contribution to European knowledge of Indian religions. Although Lord is aware that the Banians 'suppose time to be running on the fourth age of the world'[32] his comments here appear to be largely based on his own observations of the contemporary religious observances of the Banians. So although these are presented in chapter seven as being prescribed in the 'Shaster' (scripture) delivered to 'Bremaw', the Almighty's agent of creation in the second age, Lord warns his readers that 'I shall somewhat digress from their injunctions, which for the most part present things less pertinent to be known, to a more particular display of their manners'.[33]

Chapters eight and nine, which deal with the Banians' 'moral' and 'ceremonial' law respectively, are the heart of the *Discovery* and are substantially longer than any of the other chapters. Lord's remark that

[27] Prasad suggests that Lord's authorities are mainly local or regional. Prasad 1980: 316.
[28] Lord 1999: 10, 54.
[29] See Harrison 1990: 106–112.
[30] Lord 1999: 5.
[31] Lord 1999: 70.
[32] Lord 1999: 91.
[33] Lord 1999: 70.

'the priest and the merchant man ... hold the greatest agreement in their worship, and ... the ruler and the handicrafts man, do most correspond in theirs' has its basis in the links which exist between the Brahman and Vāṇiā, and between the Rājput and Kolī castes.[34] Lord finds 'nothing prodigious to opinion' in 'the principal part of their law'. He does, however, take exception to the first commandment (not to kill 'any living creature whatsoever it be') and to part of the second (the prohibition on consuming wine or meat). Lord observes that the first commandment is based upon the belief that all living creatures have the same kind of soul. This he denies on the authority of the ancients' distinction between vegetant, sentient and rational souls. His real target, however, is the idea of transmigration, which he takes to be the rationale for the prohibition on eating meat.[35] Much of the rest of the chapter is taken up with a discussion of transmigration, and a refutation of the doctrine. It is notable that, with the exception of the introductory and concluding sections, this is the only part of the *Discovery* where Lord engages in a serious critique of what he describes.

In the ninth chapter Lord gives an extended description of Banian ritual observances, noticing seven elements in particular: ritual bathing in rivers, marking the forehead, tendering of prayers and offerings, temple worship, the sacred nature of the Ganges and other rivers, the special status of the cow, and what he calls the 'invocation of saints' i. e. the worship of Hanumān, Gaṇeśa and other gods.[36] Lord also describes Banian ceremonies at 'their baptizings or naming of their children' noting the use of astrology, and gives full descriptions of the marriage and funeral ceremonies he witnessed while in India. He mentions *satī*, 'which to this day is observed in some places and for some persons of greater worth, though the examples be more rare now, than in former times', and notes that the custom is not prescribed in the 'Shaster', but has sprung up amongst them 'since these laws and injunctions'.[37]

The remaining four chapters concerning the second age describe the various groups among the Banians. In chapter ten Lord discusses the different divisions of the Brahmans. He mentions also the 'more special Bramane', by which he clearly intends the Jains, and distinguishes five of the Jain *gacchas* (sects). In connection with his discussion of the

[34] See Shah and Desai 1988: 7,15.

[35] Although he later describes the care taken by the Jains to preserve animal life, Lord does not seem to have realized the importance of *ahiṃsā*, non-violence, in Indian thought. On transmigration in seventeenth-century English texts see Teltscher 2000: 161–165.

[36] Although Lord describes the Banians as having 'brains intoxicate with the fumes of error and polytheism' (94) his informants did not explain to him the *pañcāyatana pūjā*, the worship of five gods, which is perhaps the element of modern Hinduism most accurately described as polytheistic.

[37] Lord 1999: 66.

'Cutteryes' (chapter eleven) he provides some historical details about the invasion of Gujarat in the time of the Delhi Sultanate drawn from traditions current in Gujarat.[38] Although brief, chapters twelve and thirteen, which contain descriptions of the Banian merchants and the lowest castes, are crucial for an understanding of Lord's presentation of the Banian religion. They will be discussed in detail below.

The two final, and much shorter, chapters report the Banians' account of the third and fourth ages of the world respectively. Their only real purpose is to fill out the scheme of the four *yugas* which Lord here identifies as 'the first, *Curtain* [*Kṛta*]; the second, *Dvauper* [*Dvāpara*]; the third, *Tetraioo* [*Tretā*]; the fourth *Kolee* [*Kali*]'.[39] He mistakes their order (the *Tretā* precedes the *Dvāpara yuga*) and also wrongly states that the last age is the longest. Otherwise the chapters contain little besides the introduction for the first time in Lord's account of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, which confirms the suggestion that his authorities were Vaiṣṇavas.

A Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians: *sources*

The title page of the *Discovery* claims the authority of three different sources of information for Lord's work. The work is declared to be 'Gathered from their Bramanes, teachers of that sect: As the particulars were comprized in the book of their law, called the Shaster: Together with a display of their manners, both in times past, and at this present'. Determining the identity of Lord's sources is the first step in understanding his construction of 'the Banian religion'. The sources of authority claimed are personal (the 'Bramanes'), textual ('the Shaster') and observational ('their manners ... at this present'). The claim to the authority of each of these sources is elaborated in the Introduction. The claim to the authority of direct observation is apparent in Lord's first description of the Banians: 'a people presented themselves to mine eyes ... Truth to say, mine eyes unacquainted with such objects, took up their wonder and gazed'.[40]

The claim to textual authority is elaborated in Lord's statement that he 'essayed to fetch materials for [his work] out of their manuscripts', and 'with the help of interpreters, made my collections out of a book of theirs called the Shaster, which is to them as their Bible, containing the grounds of their religion in a written word.'[41] Although Lord describes this text as

[38] For an assessment of the historical value of this account, and suggestions for its sources, see Lord 1999: 74–78.

[39] Lord 1999: 92.

[40] Lord 1999: 9.

[41] Lord 1999: 10.

divided into 'three tracts', containing the moral, ceremonial, and caste law respectively, and devotes a chapter to the contents of each, it is probable that there is no specific text identifiable as Lord's 'Shaster'.[42] It is not likely that Lord knew any Indian language well enough to have read any significant text, even if he had been granted access to one.[43] As he states, he relied on interpreters, who would probably have drawn on more than one text.[44] Any attempt to identify a specific text would in any case be rendered difficult by Lord's habit of mixing those elements in his account which are supposed to be drawn from the 'Shaster' with his own direct observations and with that which is 'by the Banians delivered', i. e. information received directly from his interlocutors.

In substantiating his claim to Brahmanic authority Lord mentions that Thomas Kerridge, the President of the English factory at Surat, 'to give this undertaking the better promotion, interested himself in the work, by mediating my acquaintance with the Bramanes.'[45] Despite this claim, it will be shown below that even if some of his information came from conversations with Brahmans, Vāṇiā merchants were a more significant source.

The 'Bramanes', the 'Banians' and Lord's Discoverie

The ambiguity in Lord's use of 'Banian', combined with his tendency to integrate what he learnt from different sources, makes it difficult to identify Lord's personal authorities. Earlier writers on Lord have noted that much of his information appears to have come from Nāgar Brahmans

[42] The term *śāstra* may refer to 'any book or treatise, especially any religious or scientific treatise, any sacred book or composition of divine authority', and even to the Veda. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1872; Oxford: Clarendon, 1899) *s. v.* '*śāstra*'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) cites Lord's as the first recorded use of the term in English (*s. v.* 'Shastra'). Randle suggests that the three tracts of the Shaster may 'reflect an enumeration of the Vedas as three (omitting the *Artharva-veda*)' (Randle 1937: 286).

[43] No evidence is offered for the claim, made in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and repeated by other authors, that Lord 'acquired some knowledge of Hindustani and Persian'. Lord himself makes no claim to understand Indian languages, and the idea that he could appears to be based solely on the fact that he described his work as taken from the 'Shaster and 'the book delivered to Zertoost'. Rawlinson comments: 'Only a few exceptional men, like Kerridge, Methwold, and Oxinden ever acquired proficiency as "linguists" or interpreters.' (Rawlinson 1920: 122). In the introductions to each section of his book Lord mentions that he used interpreters.

[44] See below, p.78 for suggestions of particular texts underlying sections of Lord's work.

[45] Lord 1999: 10.

and Jain merchants,[46] and elements of his account are plainly suggestive of such influence. The most significant evidence is in the tenth chapter, where Lord discusses the division of the people into 'four tribes or casts' and the 'kinds' of 'the first of those tribes, called the Bramanes'. Here Lord relates that, according to the tradition of the Banians, they are bound by the third tract of 'the Shaster':

> to have Bramanes to instruct the people in matters of religion; to have Cutteryes that should sway the sceptre, and keep men in obedience; to have merchant men that should use traffic and trade as did Shuddery; to have servile and manufactory men, that should serve the uses of the world in the handicrafts, as did Wyse.[47]

The 'Bramanes', being 'such as discharge the priestly office amongst the people ...' are of two sorts, 'the more common Bramanes, of which there are a greater number in India', and 'the more special, of which there be fewer, and these be called by the Banians, Verteas, by the Moors, Sevrahs'. Regarding the more common 'Bramanes', Lord writes:

> The more common Bramane has eighty-two casts or tribes, assuming to themselves the names of that tribe, which were so many wise men or scholars famed for their learning amongst them, called augurs or soothsayers, of such a place of dwelling. Thus the prime of them was called Visalnagranauger that is, the augur of Visalnagra, the second Vulnagranaugur, that is, the augur of Vulnagra, a town so called. And so of the rest according to these eighty-two casts to be distinguished, being Bramanes, of the discipline of such an augur.[48]

Lord's 'Visalnagra' and 'Vulnagra' are Vīsalnagar (or Visnagar) and Vaḍnagar, the two chief centres or places of origin of Nāgar Brahmans. Lord later refers to Vīsaladeva[49], the founder of Vīsalnagar, which confirms the impression that members of a caste originating from this town were among his informants. However, this evidence alone does not show that Lord's informants were Brahmans, merely that they were probably Nāgars. Like Nāgar Brahmans, Nāgar Vāṇiās 'claim Vaḍnagar as their original seat ... their family priests are Nāgar Brahmans.'[50]

[46] Randle suggests that while Lord's informants were Nāgar Brahmans, 'his "Banian", although to some extent a composite picture, represents on the whole a Jain merchant' (Randle 1937: 280, 287). 'To learn about the "Banians", Lord consulted Brahmans, probably Nāgar Brahmans.' (Lach and Van Kley 1993: 645).

[47] Lord 1999: 69. Note that Lord refers to neither 'Shudderyes' nor 'Banians', but rather to 'merchant men'.

[48] Lord 1999: 71. Randle suggests that Lord derives 'augur' by dropping the initial 'N' from Nāgar and equating the term with the Latin *augur*. Given the description of those called augurs as 'wise men or scholars, famed for their learning' it seems equally likely that his usage is derived from *ācārya*.

[49] Vīsaladeva Vāghela (reigned 1243–1261). For a detailed discussion of the historical figures mentioned in Lord's account of the invasion of Gujarat by the forces of Alā-ud-dīn, see Lord 1999: 74–78.

[50] Campbell 1901: 73.

The 'more special Bramanes' are Jains, who are known as 'Verteas' in sixteenth-century Portuguese works.[51] As 'Shevras', they are among the castes, together with the 'Banias', discussed in the *Mir'āt-i-Ahmadi*, a Persian history of Gujarat written c.1761 by Mirzā 'Ali Muhammad Khān, a *diwān* of Gujarat under the successors of Aurangzeb.[52] Lord's description of these 'Bramanes' reads as follows:

> Now for the more special Bramane, by them called the Vertea, he is some man of the cast of the Shudderyes, or merchant men, who for devotion takes this condition on him. He is one that for his habit wears a woollen garment of white, descended to the middle of his thigh, leaving the lower parts naked. His head is always uncovered, as a witness of his perpetual reverence of God above. They do not shave, but pluck off all the hair on their heads, save some small remainder on the crown, the like they do from their chin also. Of this sort of Bramane there be several casts likewise. One is called the Soncaes, and these go not to Church, but perform divine rites at home. Another is of the Tuppaes, these go to Church to pray. A third is of the Curthurs, and these pray by themselves, without society. A fourth called the Onkeleaus, and these endure not images. A fifth called the Pushaleaus, the most strict of them all. These kind of Bramanes have a festival called Putcheson, which is kept once every month, by five days solemnization, but between each day of the five they keep a fast. This feast is kept at the ablest men's houses, and commonly at those times a pension is given, to restrain the death of cattle, or other living creatures. More strict they seem to be in many things than the common Bramanes, for the other are not forbidden marriage, these are; more abstinent they are in diet, for out of the former feasts they eat nothing, but what is given them, and reserve nothing for another meal. More cautelous they are for the preservation of things animate, for they will drink no water but boiled, that so the vapour which they suppose the life of the water, may go out. They disperse their very dung and ordure with a beasome, least it should generate worms that be subject to destruction, and they keep an hospital of lame and maimed flying fowl, redeemed by a price, which they seek to restore. They have all things in common, but place no faith in outward washings, but rather embrace a careless and sordid nastiness. And this is sufficient to note concerning this kind of Bramane.[53]

This is evidently an account of Śvetāmbara Jains.[54] What is noticeable is that Lord explicitly identifies these 'Bramanes', as 'of the cast of the

[51] Two suggested etymologies and a summary of other references are given in Lach 1965: 459–60.

[52] See Desai 1981: 55.

[53] Lord 1999: 72–73.

[54] Jain *gacchas* proliferated among the Śvetāmbaras from the eleventh century. Two of those Lord mentions, the Tapa and Kharatara ('Tuppaes', 'Curthurs') *gacchas*, are still important. The 'Onkeleaus' may be the Loṅkāgaccha, founded by Loṅkāśāha at the end of the fourteenth century, who sought to rid Jainism of image-worship. The foundation of this *gaccha*, which reached the height of its influence in the sixteenth century, may have been influenced by the presence of Islam in India. Lord's 'Soncaes' and 'Pushaleaus' are not readily identifiable, although the latter may be the 'Bṛhat (extensive)- or Laghu (small)- posāla (monastery)'. These *gacchas*, associated with *posālas*, are attested in Jain inscriptions, and may have appeared to Lord to be the strictest of the Jain orders. *Paryuṣaṇa* 'abiding', the most important event in the ritual calendar of the Śvetāmbaras, takes place once a year, during the monsoon. However, Lord's identification of it with a monthly fast is not as inaccurate as it may seem at first sight: 'Broadly speaking, *Paryuṣaṇa* refers to the entire rain retreat ... the full season of the rain retreat is four months ... More specifically, *Paryuṣaṇa-parva* is the "fast" that ends the year, occupying a specific time-frame within the whole rain retreat. It lasts eight to ten days, or longer ... Von Glasenapp describes this fast as modeled on the *poṣadha* fast; alternately, one can say that a "special edition" of the *poṣadha* fast is used in the *Paryuṣaṇa-parva*. The *poṣadha* is a special fast performed on four special days (*parva*) in each month.' (Folkert 1993: 172–173). Jain payments to preserve the lives of animals, and the *piñjrapol*, a sanctuary for wounded or aged animals, were frequently mentioned in travellers' accounts of western India, e. g. Linschoten 1885, I: 253–4; Della Valle 1892, I: 72; Ovington 1929: 177.

Shudderyes, or merchant men'. He has clearly observed that the professional religious among the Jains are outside of Brahmanical orthodoxy. This may also indicate that Lord knew 'merchant men' among the 'Verteas', i. e. members of the Vāṇiā caste.

The evidence suffices to show that Lord's account of 'the Banian religion' includes elements drawn from his observations of, or conversations with, both Jains and members of a caste which claimed origin from Vīsalnagar and Vaḍnagar. However, there are good reasons for thinking that Lord's account of the religion of 'the Banians' in the wider sense, i. e. of Hindus and Jains in general, is mainly derived from those he says are 'most properly called Banians', i. e. members of the Vāṇiā mercantile caste, and that these in turn may be identified as Vallabhācārya's *saṃpradāya*.

Despite his claim to have had access to the Brahmans through the mediation of Kerridge, Lord, like other European writers, found that the Brahmans 'will scarce admit a stranger conversation'. The Company existed to trade, and, given that on Lord's account, 'nothing is bought but by the mediation of these, who are called Banians', it is clear that it is with the Banians (in the narrow sense) that the factors would have most to do. Pietro Della Valle, who travelled in India between 1614 and 1626 describes the difficulties of obtaining information on religious subjects: 'the Indians who talkt with us, either in the Portugal or the Persian-tongue, being all Factors or Merchants, and consequently unlearned, could not give us any account of these things; besides they speak these languages ill, and are not intelligible save in buying and selling.'[55] Lord uses the term 'Banian' thirty-one times in the body of his work.[56] Of

[55] Della Valle 1892, I: 72.

[56] On occasion Lord also uses the term 'Shuddery' or 'merchant man' where he might have used 'Banian' as this is clearly what he has in mind. See, for example, chapter VIII. 'Banian' appears also in the title ('the Sect of the Banians') and the running head ('A Discoverie of the Banian Religion') of the first part of the Display.

these uses, ten appear in locutions which express Lord's claim to have derived his information from the Banians themselves.[57] Although Lord uses the term 'Bramane' almost twice as often, the term is used in the vast majority of cases in reference to the Brahmans' priestly role and, with the exception of the claim in the title of the *Discovery* that the work on the Banians is 'gathered from their Bramanes, teachers of that sect', the term never appears in any direct claim to have derived information from the Brahmans.[58] Thus, despite the title and Lord's claim in his introduction to have had access to the Brahmans, in fact he consistently presents his sources as 'Banians', rather than 'Bramanes'. If Lord's informants were Banians, this would also explain his decision to use 'Banian' as a generic term despite being aware that it 'most properly' referred only to one particular group.

Lord's account of 'the Banian religion' is consistent with the suggestion that his primary informants were Vāṇiās. Although the Vāṇiā caste, as noted above, would have included some Jains, many of the Vāṇiā merchants of Gujarat in the sixteenth century belonged to the *bhakti saṃpradāya* of Vallabhācārya.[59] The 1901 *Gazetteer of the Bombay*

[57] 'as it is by the Banians delivered', 'say the Banians', 'according to the Banians' tradition' (Chapter I); 'according to the tradition of the Banians' (Chapter VI); 'says the Banian', 'say the Banians', 'as it is unfolded by the tradition of the Banians' (Chapter VII); 'the Banians deliver' (Chapter VIII); 'called by the Banians' (Chapter X); 'the Banians' opinion' (Chapter XV). Of the remainder, four are adjectival, referring to the Banian 'writings', 'law', 'injunction', and 'religion'. In the epistles dedicatory, and the introduction, the term is used four times to refer to the Banians *tout court*, ('the Banian'; 'this sect of the Banians'; 'Banians, a people foreign to the knowledge of the Christian world', 'the said Banians'). The term is also once used thus in chapter VIII ('the Banians seem to halt in their philosophy'). 'Banian' is used five times in Chapter XII, discussing the meaning of the term ('the meaning of the name Banian', 'those that are most properly called Banians', 'concerning the name Banian', 'the name of Banians', 'these, who are called Banians'). Three uses, in the chapter on the Rājputs, refer to 'the Banian state'. Finally, the term is used four times to conjoin or to contrast the Banians with other groups; the phrase 'the Bramanes and the Banians' appears twice, and the phrase 'these Bramanes or Banians' once, in chapter VIII where Lord is discussing the links between these groups, which 'hold the greatest agreement in their worship' in contrast to 'Cuttery and Wyse, the ruler and the handicrafts man' who 'most correspond in theirs.' These 'purer Gentiles' are said to observe 'the diet of the Banians, abstaining from flesh or wine' (Chapter XIII).

[58] Lord uses the term 'Bramane' sixty-one times in the *Discovery*. Almost two-thirds of these occur in just two chapters, namely those on 'their ceremonial law, in their washings, anointings, offerings under green trees, prayers, pilgrimages, invocations, adorations, together with the forms of their baptizings, marriages, and burials, customary amongst them' (Chapter IX) and on 'the Bramanes; the derivation of the name, their kinds, the number of their casts, their ministerial discharge, studies, and school discipline' (Chapter X).

[59] Vallabhācārya quickly gained a sizeable following across northern India, following the tours he and his successor (his second son Viṭṭhalanātha) made through the region. Viṭṭhalanātha is reported to have visited Gujarat at least six times (Majmudar 1965: 214).

Presidency states that 'as a class Gujarat Vanias are staunch adherents of the Vallabhacharya sect to which they are said to have been converted about four hundred years ago.' The same source reports not only that 'Vanias, other than Jains, are mostly Vallabhacharis', but that the converse is also true: 'The large majority of the Vallabhacharis are Vanis [*sic*] of all castes throughout Gujarat.'[60] Lord's description of the worship of the Banians, while not detailed enough to allow unambiguous identification of those involved as devotees of Vallabha, is at least compatible with the present practice of the *saṃpradāya*. Given that many, or even most, Vallabhācārīs were Vāṇiās, a comparison of what is known of this group with Lord's description of the Banian religion may serve further to substantiate the suggestion that his primary sources were Vāṇiā merchants.

Although many of the practices which Lord describes would have been common to other Hindus whom he observed, and his description of the worship that he observed will to some extent reflect that of more than one group,[61] nevertheless the ritual practices of Vallabhācārya's *saṃpradāya* are recognizable in his account. Lord remarks that the worship he observed:

> may hold some resemblance with common service, were it purged of superstitious ceremony. The sum of which devotion, is the repetition of certain names of God, dilated and explained, where also they use processions, with singing, and loud

Before his death in 1586, Viṭṭhalanātha divided the leadership of the *saṃpradāya* among his seven sons, distributing the nine primary *svarūpas* of Kṛṣṇa between them. The sites of these remain the primary religious centres of the *saṃpradāya*; Viṭṭhalanātha's sixth son, Yadunātha was given the *svarūpa* Srī Bālakṛṣṇajī which is today in Surat (although there is a rival claimant to the *svarūpa* of Yadunātha in Vārāṇasī). The fact that vows of *sannyāsa* were not required of members would have made the *saṃpradāya* attractive to the wealthy merchant classes, and the movement gained many followers among them. The *saṃpradāya* remains influential among the commercial castes of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bombay, including of course the Vāṇiā caste. N. A. Thoothi reports that the 1891 census found that of the Hindus in Gujarat '2 % were Jains, 8 % were Shaivites, mostly Brahmins, 15 % were animists, and rest were Vaishnavites'. The few Kṣatriyas were also Śaivites (Thoothi 1935: 351). A century later, the situation had hardly changed: 'In Gujarat, the Hindus are divided between the followers of Vishnu and those of Shiva ... The Brahmins, except a few who belong to the Swaminarayan sect are the followers of Lord Shiva. The Banias, the merchant class, as a rule are devotees of Vallabhachari and the Rajputs show great attachment to Shiva.' (Rajguru 1994: 67). There are therefore good reasons for thinking that the merchant community of Surat in Lord's time would have included among its numbers many followers of Vallabhācārya's *saṃpradāya*.

[60] Campbell 1901: 89, 530–531.

[61] Lord does not, for example, discuss the significance of the different colours and styles of marking the forehead, which suggests that he did not differentiate between one group and another unlike, for example, Wollebrandt Geleynssen De Jongh, a Dutch factor who was in Gujarat in the 1620s, who distinguishes Vaiṣṇavas and Smārtas among the Banians. See Gokhale 1979: 35.

tinkling of bells, which chanting is of their commandments, with offerings to images, and such like impertinent services.[62]

This is reminiscent of the *sevā* (service) to Kṛṣṇa in Vallabhācārya's *saṃpradāya*, which typically includes *kīrtana*, 'the singing aloud of the names and virtues and the events in the *līlās* of Srī Kṛṣṇa'[63] and offerings to the *svarūpa* (image) of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, certain sections of Lord's account of Banian religion appear to be based on texts which were important for the *saṃpradāya*. Lord's version of the Banians' beliefs concerning the creation follows the account in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the text of final resort for the *saṃpradāya*. Although broadly similar accounts occur in other texts, and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is important for other Hindu religious groups, again what we read of the creation in Lord is at least compatible with his informants having been followers of the *puṣṭimārga* of Vallabhācārya.[64] If they were, the likelihood is that they were also Vāṇiās. However, the suggestion that some, at least, of Lord's informants, were followers of Vallabhācārya does not exclude the possibility of the influence of the Nāgar Brahmans or the Jains, evidence of which has been discussed above. There were also Nāgar Brahmans among the followers of Vallabhācārya,[65] and in general, 'the Banias were much influenced by the Jainistic modes in diet and devotion to the welfare of birds and animals'.[66]

Perhaps the most obvious and serious error in Lord's work, and the most significant problem for the identification of his sources as Vāṇiā merchants, is his identification of 'those that are most properly called Banians' as 'Shudderyes'.[67] The confusion may have arisen from the lack of exact correlation between the theory of the four *varṇa*s as explained in various Hindu texts, and the complex actual patterns of *jāti* (birth-group) among Hindus. We have already noted that in the group of chapters in which this error occurs, Lord mixes his own observations with what he was able to discern, through interpreters, of the 'Shaster', and the error may result from his attempt to fit the former to the pattern laid out in the

[62] Lord 1999: 61.

[63] Barz 1976: 83.

[64] Bhatt's account of creation in the Śuddhādvaita system of Vallabhācārya is still closer to that attributed by Lord to the Banians. See Bhatt 1953: 352.

[65] A nineteenth-century work describes the Nāgar Brahmans as divided between Smārtas and the followers of Vallabhācārya and Swami Narayana (Wilson 1877: 61). Kirparam states that the Vaḍnagar Vāṇiās are 'Vallabhacarya Vaisnavas' and that 'their family priests are Nagar Brahmans' (Campbell 1901: 73).

[66] Gokhale 1979: 37. M. R. Majmudar remarks of Vallabhācārya's *saṃpradāya* that 'some look upon this new Vaiṣṇavism as Jainism tacked on to the old worship of Srī Kṛṣṇa ... Vaiṣṇavism took up Ahiṃsā as it had never done before' (Majmudar 1965: 219–220).

[67] Lord 1999: 81.

latter, in his own words to show 'what the third tract [of the 'Shaster'] imported, and how it is confirmed by their present manners and customs'.[68] He was not the first, and would not be the last European to make an error of this sort;[69] nevertheless, it is so fundamental as to remain surprising from someone with Lord's experience, and the more so if his informants were Vāṇiās.

Ram Chandra Prasad suggests that some of the blame for the inadequacies in Lord's account of the Banians' religion may lie with the Banians themselves:

> The Baniās whom [Lord] consulted do not seem to have possessed an adequate knowledge of [the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, and Purāṇas] except for a few terms and minor details that lend a touch of authenticity to what they imported to Henry Lord. It is indeed unfortunate that Lord in most cases relied upon oral authority, and on the conversational information of ignorant and ill-instructed individuals.[70]

Although this would confirm the impression that Lord's sources were ordinary Banians rather than educated Brahmans,[71] as Prasad himself notes, no Banian would have described himself as a Śūdra.[72]

Lord's understanding of caste was limited; for example, he nowhere adverts to the distinction between the twice-born and other castes and he discusses *upanayana* only in relation to the Brahmans. He does connect the ritual of *upanayana* with 'the purity of that [i. e. the Brahman] caste',[73] and there is some further evidence that Lord was aware of the rules of purity governing commensality and marriage.[74] However, he seems to have identified the most important line of demarcation as that running between the Brahmans and other castes, rather than between the twice-born and others. This may help to explain his error in placing the Vāṇiās in the Śūdra caste. Although Lord did not appreciate the importance of the twice-born, given that he was aware of the Brahman concern for purity, it may be that the willingness of the Banians to interact with

[68] Lord 1999: 68.

[69] Barbosa fails to distinguish Vaiśyas from Śūdras, identifying only 'Baneanes' in addition to Rājputs and Brahmans.

[70] Prasad 1980: 319.

[71] Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya states that there are few Sanskrit scholars among the Nāgar Brahmans of Gujarat (Bhattacharya 1973: 61). John Ovington also noted that 'few of the learned *Bramins* live near *Surat*' (Ovington 1929: 148).

[72] Prasad 1980: 319.

[73] Lord 1999: 69.

[74] In the case of the tribe of Wyse, 'at this present most ordinarily called by the name of Gentiles', Lord distinguishes between 'the purer Gentile, such as lives observant of the diet of the Banians, abstaining from flesh and wine, or using both very seldom' and 'the impure or unclean Gentile, which takes a greater liberty in diet' (Lord 1999: 81–2). Lord notes the injunctions 'that every tribe do marry such as are of his own cast' (62) and in general that they are 'bound to keep their own peculiar tribe or cast, and to observe what was proper to the faculties of each' (67).

the Europeans, in contrast to 'the Bramanes, who will scarce admit a stranger conversation', led him to think they must be of a lower caste.

Lord's account of 'the fourth cast called the Wyses' may also help to explain his identification of the Banians as Śūdras. Lord explains that the 'name Wyse implies as much as one that is servile or instrumentary ... as was Wyse, and those descended from him ... these people are at this present most ordinarily called by the name of Gentiles.' This is the only place where Lord uses the term which, in the form of 'Gentoo', was to become in the work of English writers such as Holwell a common term for the non-Muslim population of India. Lord distinguishes 'the purer Gentile, such as lives observant of the diet of the Banians' from 'the impure or unclean Gentile' who are 'the husbandmen or inferior sort of people, called the Coulees.'[75] Randle suggests that Lord 'makes Wyse the representative of the "Mechanicke or handy-crafts man", because he was not thinking of the *Vaisya-varna* at all, but of the Vaish or carpenter sub-caste of Gujarat'.[76] The Vaish are the highest ranking of the six subdivisions of the Suthār caste of carpenters. They do not eat food prepared by the other divisions of the caste, they wear the Brahmanic thread, invested 'with full Brahmanic rites', and they do not allow their widows to remarry. Many of the caste were prosperous and most abstained from alcohol and eating meat. The marriage and funeral customs of the Suthārs 'do not differ from those of the Vāṇiās and Kaṇbis'.[77] The most significant evidence for thinking that Lord did confuse the Vaiśya *varṇa* and the Vaish caste is his identification of 'Wyse', the ancestor of 'the cast of the Wyses', with Viśvakarman, the 'all-accomplishing' architect of the universe, from whom four of the Suthār subdivisions, including the Vaish, claim descent.[78] Having thus assigned the Vaiśya *varṇa* to the 'manufactory men' only the 'tribe or cast of the Shudderyes' (the Śūdra *varṇa*) remained for the Banians. As Lord did not appreciate the distinction between the twice-born and the other castes, he was able to identify the Banians as Śūdras.

The most plausible explanation, however, for Lord's erroneous identification of the Banians as Śūdras, lies in the practice of Vallabhācārya's *sampradāya*. Like other *bhakta*s, Vallabhācārya and his successors 'initiated persons from Muslim, untouchable, and Shudra backgrounds ... as well as from the Aryan *varnas*'.[79] Richard Barz notes that at the present time, 'most members of Vallabhācārya's *sampradāya* are born into the

[75] Kolīs or Kulīs, an aboriginal tribe of Gujarat.
[76] Randle 1937: 283.
[77] Campbell 1901: 202, 206.
[78] See Campbell 1901: 202, Lord 1999: 33.
[79] Barz 1976: 47.

sect rather than converted in adulthood'.[80] For both these reasons, members of the *sampradāya* receive a sectarian initiation rather than *upanayana*. As a result, '[i]nstead of a sacred thread both men and women [of the *sampradāya*] wear a basil thread *kanthi* necklace round their neck.'[81] This is in contrast to the general practice of the Vāṇiā caste,[82] and to that of the Vaish, whom Lord identifies as Vaiśyas. Not only does this explain Lord's error, but it confirms the identification of Lord's informants as Vallabhi Vāṇiās.

An assessment of A Display of Two Forraigne Sects

The *Display* was not reprinted in Lord's lifetime which suggests that it made relatively little immediate impact. However its later diffusion and influence were considerable.[83] A French translation of the *Display* by Pierre Briot was published in 1667 and a partial version of the *Discovery* appeared in the French edition of Bernard Picart's *Cérémonies et Coutumes Religieuses de Tous les Peuples du Monde*.[84] The English text was reprinted in several collections of 'Voyages': Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704–1752), Pinkerton's *General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all parts of the World* (1808–1814) and in the English translation of Picart, where it was described as 'writ with great depth of judgement and majesty of stile', the editor adding 'it is now grown scarce and sells at a dear rate.'[85] The book was also used by later European writers on Indian religions. Terry owed at least some of the extra information in the second, expanded, edition of his voyage[86] to his reading of Lord. In the first edition of his travels, Thomas Herbert referred readers interested in the religion of the 'Bannyans' to 'the description of their Religion to a Booke late written by Master Lord a Preacher to the Merchants in Surat.'[87] In the second edition Herbert included many details taken from both parts of Lord's work,

[80] Barz 1976: 20. Cf. Wilhelm Halbfass's comment that 'The commitment to the hereditary caste system may be less rigid in the sects than in mainstream "orthodoxy" ... The chosen membership in the religious or soteriological community can be more significant than the hereditary caste membership.' (Halbfass 1988: 193).
[81] Campbell 1901: 89.
[82] Russell and Lal 1916, II: 114.
[83] The English translator of the Jesuit *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, John Lockman, knew Lord's work, and gave a 'faithful epitome' of his 'most authentic account' of the Parsis. (Lockman 1743, I: 12–17). Lockman also notes that John Milton seems to have read Lord (I: 253–54). Prasad (1980: 342–3) makes the same observation.
[84] Picart 1723: 1–15.
[85] Picart 1731: x.
[86] Terry 1655. On this question see Firby 1988: 108–110.
[87] Herbert 1634: 36.

acknowledging his source only in respect of the Parsis.[88] François Bernier declared that he was 'not lesse obliged to Monsieur *Henry Lor*, and to Monsieur *Abraham Roger*, then [*sic*] to the Reverend Fathers *Kircher* and *Roa*.'[89] Sections of Lord's work were reprinted in other early works on Indian religions.[90] Perhaps the greatest compliment Lord's work received was that paid by William Jones in his Third Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1786, when he stated: 'The inhabitants of this extensive tract [Bharat] are described by Mr. Lord with great exactness, and with a picturesque elegance peculiar to our ancient language.'[91] More recently, Randle has said of the *Discovery* that excepting the 'Christian Purana' of Thomas Stevens (an English Jesuit who was in India from 1579 to his death in 1619), 'there seems to be no printed book dating from before Lord's time which gives so much information' although, he notes, 'there were certainly Portuguese ... who knew more than Lord ever learned.'[92] Comparing Lord's account of the Parsis with the works of Terry, who was in India just before Lord (1616–1619)[93], Nora Firby concludes that '[a]s a contributor to Zoroastrian studies, Lord is much the better scholar.'[94] However, to assess the value and significance of Lord's work, it is necessary to consider both the various literary genres in which it might be placed, and the different purposes which might be thought to have motivated its production.

A detailed study of Surat as Lord would have known it is given in Balkrishna Govind Gokhale's *Surat in the Seventeenth Century* (1979). Much of this account is drawn from the works of European travellers and traders of the period. These do not, however, include Lord, for the simple reason that there is very little to be learnt from his works in this respect. Indeed, something of the nature of Lord's books can be understood from the almost complete absence within them of any physical description of Surat or Gujarat. Apart from a brief discussion of the 'estate' of the 'Cutteryes' (Rājputs) and an even shorter account of their forms of

[88] Herbert 1638. The account of the 'Bannyans' and the 'Persaes' occupies pages 40–54. Herbert acknowledges 'Master *Lord*, a worthy Minister' on page 48.

[89] Bernier 1711: 145 and 1672: 157.

[90] See, for example, the introduction to the English translation of Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1719: v–ix.

[91] Jones 1807, III: 30.

[92] Randle 1937: 294. Thomas Stevens, *Doutrina cristã em língua concani* Lisbon: Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, Agência General das Colónias, 1945 (Facsimile reprint of the second edition published at Goa in 1622). Lach and Van Kley suggest it is 'the first printed summary of Hindu doctrines and practices to appear in Europe' (Lach and Van Kley 1993: 646).

[93] A short version of Terry's voyage was first published in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625); a longer version (which may owe something to Lord's work, published in 1630) appeared on its own in 1655.

[94] Firby 1988: 110.

contract, his description of the Banians is focused entirely upon their religious beliefs and practices. The historical material in his account of the 'Persees' includes only that which is required to explain the early growth of Zoroastrianism and how they came to be in India. In this respect there are no published precedents to Lord's work. Earlier and contemporary works mention religious beliefs and practices as part of the general description of a region. So in works such as Christopher Farewell's *An East-India Colation* (1633) and even in those by clergymen, such as Terry's *Voyage to East India* (1655), reports of Indian religions are found among extensive descriptions of the cities and the countryside surrounding them, the numbers of foreign merchants, types of wheat and rice produced, the sorts of animals found, pastimes of the inhabitants, etc.; in short, descriptions of the land and all 'the most remarkable things of nature and art therein'.[95] In contrast, Lord does not even mention the Gopi *talao* (tank) described by virtually every other seventeenth-century writer who visited Surat.[96] We cannot therefore agree with Jyotsna Singh that Lord 'reinforces the generic expectations of the standard travel record, namely the discovery of marvels and curiosities.'[97] Lord's work is not then to be placed in the genre of travel literature, except in its very widest sense. Perhaps the best way of indicating how different Lord's work is from that of contemporary travel writing is by comparing it with the account of the Banians we find in Farewell's *An East-India Colation*, published three years after Lord's work:

> Our first journey or place of rest from *Surat*, was *Baroch* ... From hence within a day or two wee set forth, and by slow journies (as before) came to *Brodera*, a dryer place (by a great River) but the greater Citie, and all a plaine and pleasant Country (*Baroch* especially) for Orchards, Tankes or Pondes, verie spacious, and artificially made, (in forme, for worke and workemanshippe not unlike our Bathes) for generall use and uses; Tombes, and Piramides many in open Fields (and private Gardens) about which are to be seene certaine Penitentiaries, or votaries (they say) but Lunatickes and men (I thinke) really possest with Devils, as in the Gospell is mentioned; theyr bodies naked, cut, and lanced with knives, or stones, staring and stalking, to and fro, no lesse wofull than dreadfull to behold; as was also the sight of a Pagot, or a Cell of devotion descending into a Vault under ground, where (being desirous of discoveries) wee saw an ugly Idoll against a

[95] Edward Terry, *A Relation of a Voyage to the Easterne India*. In Purchas 1905, IX: 13.

[96] See, for example, Della Valle 1892, I: 34; Roe 1899: 78, 112; Fryer 1909, I: 261. Further references are given in Gokhale 1979: 18–19.

[97] Singh 1996: 21. Regarding the 'curiosities' described by European travellers, it should be remembered that for Europeans of the seventeenth-century 'the word "curious" had little of the sense of merely attention-arousing or prying associated with the word in twentieth-century usage. Rather, the word was used in a sense closer to the Latin adjective *curiosus* which referred to painstaking accuracy, attention to detail and skillful enquiry.' Mungello 1985: 13–14.

wall, representing (it seemes) theyr God, or theyr feare, but a plaine Devill as wee call it, in like forme paynted or graven, whom a certaine Sect of *Banians* doe worship, whereof there are many Sects, but of this no more.[98]

Lord's account of Indian *religions* further contradicts Stietencron's claim that European writers were trapped by the 'preconceived notion that it was *one* religion they were dealing with'.[99] He states that 'although the term "Hinduism" came into common use as late as the nineteenth century, the underlying concept of a unity of Indian religion was already in existence in the West before that religion was actually encountered by European missionaries and traders'.[100] While the 'concept of a unity of Indian religion' certainly predated the use of the term 'Hinduism', such a concept can be found in the works of those who 'actually encountered' Indian religion, as well as in other works. It is true that after Lord, writers such as Alexander Ross continue to divide the world into three or four different religions on the basis of a preconceived notion of 'Heathenism'. This, however, should alert us to the fact the we should not neglect to distinguish between compilers of vast collections, like Ross, and those, like Lord, who wrote about the religions on the basis of their own experience. For far from treating the religions of India as a single monolithic religion, Lord distinguishes different religions and groups within religions at every level. Most obviously we have the separation of 'the religion of the Banians' and 'the religion of the Persees'. Lord also mentions other types of religion; for example, he notes that before Zoroaster appeared, the Persians had 'a peculiar kind of worship. But the religion that is the subject of this book,[101] is a religion that was received in the reign of Gustasph, the son of Lorasph, their sixteenth king in succession, concerning the worship of fire'.[102] He further distinguishes the Jains as 'the more special Bramane', and identifies different groups among them. A close reading of Lord and subsequent works on Indian religions by European authors will show that the concepts which they used to refer to the different Indian religions did not simply emerge from 'preconceived notions' about religion and remain fixed, but rather were continuously refined on the basis of a growing knowledge of the Indian religions. Although he was aware of divisions among the Banians, Lord's understanding was not as far advanced as that of his Dutch contemporaries Wollebrandt Geleynssen De Jongh (1594–1674) and especially Abraham Roger, who distinguishes sectarian Vaiṣṇavite, Śāivite, Śākta and Pāśupata groups from orthodox Smārtas and *nāstika* Cārvākas.

Peter Marshall argues that early British writers on Hinduism 'wrote with contemporary European controversies and their own religious preoccupations very much in mind. As Europeans have always tended to do, they created Hinduism in their own image.'[103] This is true of different writers only to different degrees. Lord does express his hope that the *Display* might 'beget in good Christians the greater detestation of these heresies'.[104] However, Firby notes that while Terry wrote in order to 'make this Nation ashamed of so many carriages of the Heathens'[105] and therefore 'ignored or mentioned only briefly those aspects [of the religions he described] which, by arousing contempt, might have lessened the impact of his criticisms of Christians',[106] one of the reasons that 'Lord is much the better scholar',[107] is that he did not edit his account in this way. Moreover, it is by no means self-evident that we should take expressions of 'detestation of these heresies' such as we find in Lord at face value. It may be that such claims appear in Lord and other writers because there was a need to justify devoting time and effort to the description of 'heathen' religion.[108] That such works required justification is evident from the reason given by August Hermann Francke for not publishing Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg's *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter*. Francke wrote that publication was not to be thought of because the Missionaries were sent out to stamp out heathenism, not to spread heathenish nonsense in Europe.[109]

In Lord's work Firby detects paganopapism, a strategy that was to become much more widespread in the later seventeenth century: 'He was looking in non-Christian religions for analogies with Roman Catholic Christianity to denigrate the latter – to form a "rod" for the Papist's

98 Farewell 1633: 25–27.

99 Stietencron 1997: 37.

100 Stietencron 1995: 72. It should be noted that Lord was neither a missionary, nor a trader, but rather a chaplain.

101 The 'book' in question is *The Religion of the Persees*, not the *Display* as a whole. The religion that is the subject of the book is therefore Parsi religion, not 'Indian heathenism'.

102 Lord 1999: 113.

103 Marshall 1970: 43.

104 Lord 1999: 147.

105 Terry 1655: 452–455, cited in Firby 1988: 111.

106 Firby 1988: 111.

107 Firby 1988: 110.

108 Similar claims appear in other early works on non-Christian religions. Alexander Ross justifies his *Pansebeia, or, A View of All Religions in the World* (1653) by stating that while truth may be 'comely in itself', it is 'yet more lovely, when compared to falsehood'. (Preface A3). Adrian Reland states that his intention in writing an account of Islam is that 'we may be able to attack it with sure Blows' and 'valid Reasonings' (Adrian Reland, *Of the Mahometan Religion* (London, 1712), cited in Pailin 1984: 6).

109 'A. H. Francke schrieb nach Trankebar zurück, an einen Druck der Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter könne gar nicht gedacht werden, die Missionare seien ausgesandt das Heidenthum in Indien auszurotten, nicht aber den heidnischen Unsinn in Europa zu verbreiten.' (Germann 1867: vii).

back.'[110] The conclusion to *The Religion of the Persees* does draw attention to some alleged parallels in the practices of the Parsis and 'the Papists'[111] and Lord may well have shared the anti-Papist views of Francis White, if indeed he was White's curate. But Lord's work is not written to a paganopapist thesis, or surely he would have made many more such comments.[112]

Likewise Firby's comment that Lord wrote in order to hold up 'both Hinduism and Zoroastrianism for condemnation',[113] can scarcely be said to give a balanced impression of his work. For while Lord does make some comments in his introductory and concluding sections which offer a justification of his work as apologetic, it is notable that, with the exception of some comments on the Banian law concerning their proscription of consumption of meat and wine, Lord elsewhere entirely refrains from criticism of each religion, preferring to 'leave it to the censure of them that read, what to think of it'.[114] Where he does offer criticism, Lord's strongest words are reserved for those elements of Banian and Parsi religion that seem to him to be contrary to reason.[115] Even in his 'conclusion to the reader', where Lord sums up Banian religion as 'not void of vain superstitions, and composed forgery', he shows a certain reluctance to indulge in the sort of denunciation of Hindu belief and practice that was to characterize some works that would be written on the subject in the next two and a half centuries:

> I might leave the particulars to your censure, as well as to your reading, but since I have detected such gross opinions in this sect, I cannot let them pass without a rod thrust at their backs, as a deserved penance for their crime.[116]

Lord's policy of presenting 'the Banian religion, such as it is' and leaving censure to the reader, results in a book very different from those of some

[110] Firby 1988: 111. On paganopapism see Harrison 1990: 144–146.

[111] Lord 1999: 147.

[112] Firby suggests that the environment into which Lord was born, encouraged his anti-papist attitudes: 'Lord, born in 1570, only a few years after the death of Queen Mary ended the Marian persecution of Protestants, was educated and ordained in an age when national feeling, as well as religious, encouraged national sentiments.' (Firby, 1988: 111). The date 1570 is an error; Firby elsewhere accepts the date of 1563, in part because Lord's language seems somewhat antiquated, especially in comparison with Terry's (Firby, personal communication). There are, as we have seen, reasons for thinking that Lord was born much later than 1563. If Lord was close to the average age for chaplains on first appointment this would place his birth about thirty years later, in the 1590s, close to that of Terry and in a time in which anti-papist feeling was somewhat less strident.

[113] Firby 1988: 111.

[114] Lord 1999: 147. Thus we cannot agree with the judgement of Lach and Van Kley that Lord's work is 'polemical in intent and tone' (Lach and Van Kley 1993: 646).

[115] Raymond Schwab notes that in Lord's comments we find 'the common sense of an enlightened time – as if the age of Voltaire had already dawned' (Schwab 1984: 137–8).

[116] Lord 1999: 93.

of his contemporaries. This is perhaps most noticeable in the second edition of Thomas Herbert's voyage. Herbert's account of 'the Bannyans' was drawn mostly from Lord, with a few of his own observations added. The most significant additions are critical comments:

> In this place drawing your judgement to a remembrance of what is already related: wherein, we may perceive the delusion Sathan charmes them with, whose custome it has ever been to erect to himselfe worship and Idolatry in some things (to make 'em more authenticall) cohering with the Story of our Bible, and in imitation of the Jewes: and that this *Cabala* or *Shaster* of the Bannyans is a depraved Story of the Bible, either obtain'd by some Jewes, such time as *Solomon* traded to *Ophyr* (neere these parts) or from the father of lyes, who peradventure did dictate it to his servants.[117]

His observations on their rituals have a very different character from those we find in Lord. So Herbert writes:

> above all, their horrid Idolatry to Pagods (or Images of deformed devils) is most observable: Placed in Chappels most commonly built under the Bannyan Trees (or that which *Linschot* call'd *Arbor de Rays* or tree of roots, Sir *Wal. Ral.* improperly *Ficus Indicus*) a tree of such repute amongst 'em, that they hold it impiety to abuse it, either in breaking a branch or otherwise, but contrarily adorne it with Streamers of silk and ribbons of all colours. The Pagods are of sundry sorts and resemblances, in such shapes as Satan visibly appeares unto them: ugly faced, long black haire, gogl'd eyes, wide mouth, a forked beard, hornes and stradling, mishapen and horrible, after the old filthy form of *Pan* and *Priapus*.[118]

Thus Lord's work should not be subsumed under the category of intra- or extra-Christian polemic, any more than under that of travel writing. Nor does Lord's work represent some form of proto-Orientalism. For while Lord mentions the interest and encouragement of Kerridge, and can therefore be said, like many later writers on Indian religion, to have benefited from the patronage of the East India Company, the Company had no territorial ambitions in India at the time Lord wrote, and his work cannot be said to have been produced in pursuit of such aims.[119] If any material purposes can be said to have motivated the work, it was Lord's personal ambitions, within either the Company or the Church, as is suggested by the letters of dedication and Lord's admission: 'The truth was, I was willing to earnest [Kerridge's] love to me by this injunction

[117] Herbert 1638: 43. Although Lord states that 'Satan leads those that are out of the pale of the Church, a round, in the maze of error and Gentilism' (Lord 1999: 93), here and elsewhere he makes it clear that he believes the Banians' religion to be 'a figment of their own devising' rather than an imitation of Judaism.

[118] Herbert 1638: 44.

[119] In his report to the Company in 1616 Thomas Roe advised: 'Lett this bee received as a rule that, if you will Profitt, seek it at Sea, and in quiett trade; for without controversy it is an error to affect Garrisons and Land warrs in India' (Roe 1899: 344).

[to write on the Banians]'.[120] While Lord's work inevitably bears the impress of its origin as the work of a seventeenth-century Christian chaplain to a European trading company, it nevertheless represents also the inauguration, at least in English, of a new genre of works whose primary purpose is the dissemination of information about Indian religions. Whatever other purposes it served, this should not be overlooked. Its contribution in this regard is two-fold, both as an account of a particular religious group, and as a step in the construction of 'Hinduism'. In Lord's work, 'the Banians, the ancient natives of India' are conflated with 'those that are most properly called Banians'. It has been argued that this latter group is most likely to be Vallabhi Nāgar Vāṇiās. The 'Bramanes', subdivided into 'the more common' and 'the more special' are treated as the priestly caste of this group. Lord's spurious claim to the authority of the 'Bramanes' for his work allows him to exploit the link between the Brahmans and the 'Brachmans' (whom Europe knew, even if the Banians did not, to be the ancient Indians) to legitimize his conflation of the two senses of 'Banian'. The true value of the descriptive elements of Lord's work becomes apparent if we consider it as an account of the Vallabhi Nāgar Vāṇiās of Surat in the 1620s, rather than as an early attempt to give an account of 'Hinduism' more generally. While Lord did not have the concept of 'Hinduism' in any developed form, his discussion of particular Indian religions (rather than the 'heathenism of the Indies') nevertheless represents a crucial first step in the process which led to the construction of 'Hinduism' as a pan-Indian religion. The importance of the recognition of a plurality of Indian religions in writers such as Lord and Nobili *prior* to the construction of Hinduism as a pan-Indian religion has not been acknowledged in recent works on the history of the study of Indian religions,[121] which locate the appearance of a fully-fledged, preconceived idea of Hinduism as a pan-Indian religion in the late eighteenth century, and see nothing before this period except an equally preconceived idea, namely, 'heathenism'.[122]

[120] Lord 1999: 10.

[121] An exception is the work of Gita Dharampal-Frick, who has argued that 'by referring to the historical period prior to the establishment of British rule (i. e. pre-1757) a differently oriented representation of Indian reality may be gained.' Dharampal-Frick 1995: 85.

[122] See Stietencron 1997: 37, discussed above. Likewise Richard King writes that '"Hindu" in fact only came into provenance amongst Westerners in the eighteenth century. Previously, the predominant Christian perspective amongst Europeans classified Indian religion under the all-inclusive rubric of Heathenism.' (King 1999: 99). Not only does King's account fail to do justice to the complexity of early European accounts of Indian religions, but Hindu was in use by Europeans as a marker of religious identity as early as the sixteenth century (Lorenzen 1999: 640).

5

Abraham Roger: 'A Door Open'd to the Knowledge of Occult Paganism'

The single most important seventeenth-century contribution to European knowledge of Indian religions is *De Open-Deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom* (*The Open Door to hitherto concealed Heathenism*) of the Dutch Calvinist minister Abraham Roger, published posthumously at Leiden in 1651.[1] The book is important not only for its detailed grasp of South Indian religious beliefs and practices, which has earned it the praise of writers from Anquetil-Duperron to Friedrich Max Müller and beyond,[2] and for its inclusion of the first Sanskrit text translated into and published in a European language[3] but, above all, for the way in which it lays the foundations for the emergence of the concept of a pan-Indian religion.

The work was translated into German (1663) and French (1670).[4] Much of the substance of Roger's observations appeared, without acknowledgement, in Olfert Dapper's *Asia, of Naukeurige Beschryving van Het*

[1] The full title of Roger's work is *De Open-Deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom Ofte Waerachtigh vertoogh van het Leven ende Zeden; mitsgaders de Religie, ende Godsdienst der Bramines, op de Cust Chormandel, ende de Landen daar ontrent.* The modern critical edition is by Willem Caland (Werken Uitgegeven door De Linschoten-Vereeniging, X. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915). I have used the 1670 French translation of Thomas de La Grue, checking all translations against Caland's edition. Rubiés notes that 'The French edition was prepared in Holland, and is a reliable translation of the Dutch original' albeit augmented with 'numerous annotations of an antiquarian nature' (Rubiés 2001: 242; cf. Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1030). I have also commented on the changes which are made in the versions which appear in Picart (1723 and 1731), in order to illustrate how Roger's information was integrated with what was known of Indian religions from other sources.

[2] Anquetil-Duperron noted that Roger's work 'est le meilleur corps de mythologie Indienne qui ait paru en Europe' (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, XLIX: 682 cited in Zachariae 1916: 561). A. C. Burnell described it as 'Still perhaps the most complete account of South Indian Hinduism, though by far the earliest' (Burnell 1879: 98). 'For modern students of Hindu society and religion, this book is indispensable for the detail that Roger gives about conditions on the Coromandel Coast in the mid-seventeenth century with respect to caste, to social practices, and to the religious beliefs and rites then prevailing.' (Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1057).

[3] The *Nīti*- and *Vairāgya-śatakas* of Bhartṛhari.

[4] *Abraham Rogers Offne Thür zu dem verborgenen Heydenthum*, Nuremberg, 1663. *Le theatre de l'idolatrie, ou la porte ouverte, Pour parvenir à la cognoissance du paganisme caché*, Amsterdam, 1670. For further details see the bibliographical appendix to Caland's critical edition.

Rijk des Grooten Mogols, En een groot gedeelte van Indien (1672).[5] This work was translated into English in 1673 by John Ogilby.[6] Parts of Roger's work also appeared in Baldaeus's posthumously published *Beschrijving der Oost-Indische Kusten Malabar en Coromandel benevens het eiland Ceilon* (1672).[7] An edited version of the French translation of Thomas de La Grue appeared in both the French and the English versions of Picart's collection.[8] Thus Roger's work was widely disseminated in Europe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.[9] Thomas Burnet, in the 'Appendix of the Brachmins [*sic*] Religion' to his *Archaelogiae philosophicae* (1692) which was reprinted in English translation in the deist Charles Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1693), commented that 'the Kingdom of *Choromandel*, on the Southren [*sic*] Coast of the *Indies*, has its *Brachmins*: whose Manners and Doctrine have been with no small Diligence enquired into by *Abraham Rogers*, who wrote the Book called – *Janua aperta ad Arcana Gentilismi*. Having Himself lived many years there.'[10] Diderot made use of Roger's work for

[5] *Asia, an exact description of the kingdom of the Great Mogul, and of a great part of the Indies.* Amsterdam: Jakob van Meurs, 1672.

[6] *Asia, the First Part: being an Accurate Description of Persia, and the several provinces thereof: the Vast Empire of the Great Mogul, and other parts of India ... Collected and translated ... by John Ogilby.* London: Printed by the author, 1673. The material from Roger and other writers including Terry and Della Valle appears in the section entitled 'Of the Several Religions profest in Asia', pp.103–152.

[7] The section entitled 'Afgoderye der oost-indische Heydenen' ('Idolatry of the East-Indian Heathens') was almost entirely derived from other works, particularly the *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Fenicio 1933) of Jacobo Fenicio SJ, who was in India from about 1584 to his death in 1632. Neill concludes that 'Baldaeus has no claim to be regarded as an independent investigator' (Neill 1984: 382–83, 421–423). Baldaeus's work appeared in English in the Churchills' *Collection of Voyages and Travels.* London: Printed by assignment from Messrs. [A. and J.] Churchill, 1704–1752. Volume II (1752): 509–793.

[8] A 'Dissertation sur les Mœurs et sur la Religion des Bramines, Dressée sur les Memoires du Sieur Roger Hollandois' by Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de La Martinière (1683–1743), appeared in Picart 1723. La Martinière omitted what he considered 'verbiage' and 'remarques inutiles', including most of the references to Padmanābha and all of the paraphrase of Bhartṛhari. He added other material, mostly comments intended to show that the 'Brachmans, so famous in antiquity ... who were surnam'd Gymnosophists ... were a colony of the Egyptians, whose posterity subsists to this day.' An English translation of La Martinière's version appeared in Picart 1731.

[9] Thus although, as Neill notes, Roger's work never appeared in a full English translation (Neill 1984: 419), versions of the work appeared at least three times in English: the English version of Picart, Ogilby's translation of Dapper, and the English translation of Baldaeus, which was reprinted in the Churchills' collection.

[10] Thomas Burnet, 'Appendix of the Brachmins Religion', *Archaelogiae philosophicae: sive doctrina antiqua de rerum originibus* (1692), in Blount 1693: 82–83. Burnet's reference to Roger may be the source of the apparently groundless idea that Roger's work first appeared in Latin. Caland traces the idea to a later reference to Roger's work under

his article on the 'Philosophie des Malabares' in the *Encyclopédie*, and *De Open-Deure* was a source for both Goethe and Herder.[11] There was a copy of the 1663 German translation in the library of the University of Halle, to which Ziegenbalg would have had access before going to Tranquebar.[12]

Roger's life and Indian career

The date of Roger's birth is not known. He studied under Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639) at the *Seminarium Indicum*, founded at Leiden in 1623, and described by Stephen Neill as 'the first missionary training centre of the western world ... Walaeus took into his own home a number of theological students, never more than six at a time, and undertook to give them a measure of special preparation for work in the Eastern regions.'[13] Here Roger would have received 'two years of instruction in Malay and some knowledge about Islam and other religions.'[14] In 1630 he was sent by the Amsterdam *classis* to be chaplain to the Dutch East India company, arriving in Batavia (Jakarta) on the 5th of June 1631. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to Pulicat (Pāliacatta), where he remained for just over a decade (17th of September 1632 to the 3rd of November 1642). He spent a further five years in Batavia, returning to the Netherlands in September 1647 and dying at Gouda two years later. His widow, Emmerentia Pools, arranged publication of his book, possibly with the help of those who contributed the dedicatory epistle (the preacher Jacob Sceper d.1678) and the preface (signed 'A. W. JC^{tus}', identified in Jöcher's 1751 *Lexicon* as Andreas Wissowatius, Jurisconsultus.)[15]

De Open-Deure: *sources*

Roger's primary source, acknowledged throughout the *Open-Deure*, was a Smārta Brahman named Padmanābha. Roger introduces him as 'the Brahman Padmanaba (from whose mouth I have all the mysteries of

the title *Gentilismus Reseratus* in C. G. Jöchen, *Allgemeine Gelehrten Lexikon.* Leipzig, 1751 (Roger 1915: xxvii).

[11] Roger 1915: 125, n.2.

[12] Roger 1915: 218. Ziegenbalg's knowledge of Roger's work is discussed below, p.109.

[13] Neill 1984: 377–8.

[14] Furber 1976: 327. The College was closed in 1633, having 'sent out to the East twelve preachers of more than ordinary devotion and competence' (Neill 1984: 378).

[15] For further biographical details see Roger 1915: xxvi.

heathenism which will be discovered in this book)'.[16] Padmanābha had taken refuge in a Dutch fort and there Roger had been of some service to him, as a result of which they became friends and Padmanābha served as Roger's informant and translator, through the medium of Portuguese.[17] On occasion Roger mentions discussions with a group of 'Bramines',[18] and he also names a second Brahman, Damersa, whose opinion is given where it differs from that of Padmanābha. 'Damersa', whose name Caland suggests may be Dharmarāja, is said by Roger to be a Tattvavādin Vaiṣṇava. Although Roger is reported to have learnt enough Tamil to preach in that language, Lach and Van Kley state that 'generally their conversations seem to have been in Portuguese, the *lingua franca* of trade on the Coromandel coast.'[19] Roger's knowledge of Indian texts will be discussed below although, like Lord, his knowledge of these seems to have come via his informants rather than from his own reading. Although he occasionally mentions classical authors, Roger does not appear to have relied substantially on any earlier European accounts. Theodor Zachariae suggests that Roger knew, and used, Diogo do Couto's account of the Vedas in his *Decada quinta da historia da India* published in 1612;[20] note however, the same writer's comment elsewhere that 'Was wir aus der Zeit vor Roger besitzen, kann sich mit seinem Buch nicht vergleichen.'[21] Roger's final source was his own observation of temple worship and other practices; a significant part of his text is made up from these observations, and he appears to have had greater access to temples than did some later European observers.[22]

De Open-Deure: *structure*

Roger's work is divided into two sections: the first deals with the 'Life and Manners' ('het Leven en Zeden') of the 'Bramines', the second with their 'Beliefs and Divine-Service' ('het Geloove, ende den Gods-dienst'). Lach and Van Kley comment that '[t]his division of life into secular and

[16] 'Den Bramine Padmanaba (uyt wiens mont ick hebbe alle de verborgentheden van 't Heydendom die in dit Boeck ontdeckt werden)'. Roger 1915: 1.

[17] Neill 1984: 379.

[18] See, for example, Roger 1915: 193. Although Roger gives an account of the four *varṇas*, he uses 'Bramine' as his most general term for all those he describes, this usage has been retained except where it is clear that he refers specifically to Brahmans.

[19] Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1029.

[20] Zachariae 1921: 151.

[21] Zachariae 1916: 562.

[22] Roger mentions that during the ten years he was in Pāliacatta he went into the temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva many times (Roger 1915: 124). He also mentions specific occasions on which he went into the temples with Padmanābha (e. g. Roger 1915: 120).

religious spheres, so natural to Western ways of thinking, does violence to the unity of Hinduism and imposes upon it a separation foreign to its doctrine and practices. This organization also produces repetitions, particularly of Indian terms and names, which tend to confuse and irritate the reader.'[23] The separation of religion from other spheres of life was, as we have seen, far from natural at this period even for Western ways of thinking, and the contents of the two sections of Roger's book belie Lach and Van Kley's description of it.

Although the term appears in the title of his work, Roger rarely uses 'Religie' or its derivative 'religieus', using rather 'Gods-dienst' and 'Godsdienstigh'.[24] In the first half of the seventeenth century, 'Gods-dienst' was to some extent synonymous with 'Religie', but 'Religie' itself had not yet fully acquired the meaning 'religion' and its equivalents have today. While the *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (1627) of Grotius, had appeared in an earlier, poetic, form as *Bewys van den Waren Gods-dienst is ses Boecken gestelt* (1622), Wilfred Cantwell Smith comments that even in the prose, Latin version, 'the transition is not yet complete: Grotius's position set forth under that title is about three-quarters of the way or more along a road leading from "the genuineness of Christian religiousness" to "the truth of the Christian religion".'[25] In the 1670 French version of Roger's work, 'Gods-dienst' is most often translated as 'religion', but also as 'service divin'[26] and as 'ceremonies'.[27] Thus when Roger speaks of 'den Gods-dienst der Bramines', we should not read into his work a sense of 'religion' which may indeed now be 'natural to

[23] Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1029.

[24] 'Religie' appears four times in the body of Roger's work: once in the opening paragraph of the first part (cited below), twice more in the first part (in chapter IX, where he notes that 'as the Bramines not only teach their children to read, to write and to count, but also instruct them in the points of their religion, it would be appropriate to recount here, what are the points of their religion ... but as this matter will be spoken of in the second part, we will defer it to there' Roger 1915: 30), and only once in the second part of the work (in chapter II, where he notes that 'the Bramines, according to their religion, believe that Wistnou and Eswara, procreate with their wives' Roger 1915: 93.) The adjective 'religieuse' appears twice in the first part (70, 71) and once in the second (123). 'Gods-dienst' (or the plural 'Gods-diensten') appears six times in part one, and seventeen times in part two; the adjective 'Gods-dienstigh' ('devout', 'religious') once in each part. 'Gods-dienst' is used of both the Bramines and the Eleusians, in contrast for Christianity we have 'het Christelijcke gheloove' (the Christian faith, 14). In chapter V of part one the phrase 'de Leere der Bramines' (the doctrine of the Bramines) is used twice (23). Roger's editors, especially Wissowatius, use 'Religie' much more frequently than Roger himself, and may be responsible for its appearance in the title of his work. See below, p.99.

[25] Smith 1991: 39.

[26] e. g. Roger 1670: 38.

[27] e. g. Roger 1670: 196. The 1663 German translation uses 'Gottesdienst', using 'Religion' only where 'Religie' appears in the Dutch original.

Western ways of thinking', but was yet to become so at the time Roger wrote.[28]

While there appear to be no grounds for doubting that the content of Roger's work is substantially original, rather than derived from other European works, there is no way to be certain of the extent to which the book owes its organization to those who brought it to publication after Roger's death (Pools, Sceper, Wissowatius and possibly also the publisher, F. Hackes). There is, as Lach and Van Kley note, a significant amount of repetition, and the division into chapters seems somewhat arbitrary.[29] However, the work begins with an explicit statement of the rationale for the overall division of the book into two sections:

> Our intention is not only to represent, in this treatise, the life and manners of the Bramines, but also to discover their faith and their religion. For this subject, we will divide this work into two parts; in the first we will set out the life and the way of life of the Bramines, and all that on which it depends, and in the second we will speak of their religion, and their opinions touching the divine, and also the practices and the exercises which they observe in this encounter.[30]

In the first part we find a detailed account of the life of the 'Bramines', *including* religious practices, while in the second their religious beliefs ('Geloove') and practices ('Gods-dienst') are isolated for more detailed attention. Thus Dharampal describes the first part of Roger's work as

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[28] So Balagangadhara translates Roger's statement 'Ende Overmits daer een Godt is, oock een God-dienst *moet zijn*; soo sullen wy ons gaen begheven tot het ondersoeck' (Roger 1915: 112) as follows 'Because where there is a God, a religion *must exist* too; it is thus that we shall approach our investigation'. (Balagangadhara's emphasis.) Balagangadhara suggests that this is how 'this missionary [found] out whether religion existed among the Brahmins of Coromandel' and suggests that rather than being based upon empirical research, the conclusion of Roger and those who followed him 'was based upon non-empirical considerations in Augustine and Calvin', that is, their certainty that there was no nation without a religion. (Balagangadhara 1994: 66–67). Roger's statement might better be translated as 'Where there is a God, there must also be worship of God'. See below, p.97, for further discussion of the passage in which this statement occurs.

[29] The overlapping contents of the different chapters will be discussed below. The arbitrary nature of the division into chapters is most noticeable in those in the second part dealing with temples; in La Martinière's version of Roger, ('Dissertation sur les Mœurs et sur la Religion des Bramines, Dressée sur les Memoires du Sieur Roger Hollandois') three of these (VIII–X) are combined into one chapter (VII. Of the Pagods, and Religious Worship).

[30] 'Ons voornemen is niet alleen in dit Tractaat te verthoonen het Leven ende de Zeden der *Bramines*; maer oock te ontdecken haer Geloove ende Godsdienst. Wij sullen derhalven dit werck in twee deelen verdeelen, ende in 't eerste voorstellen het Leven ende Manieren der *Bramines*, ende het ghene daer toe behoort: ende in 't weede hare Religie ende gevoelen vande Goddelijcke saken, midsgaders de practijcke, ende oeffeninghe der selver.' Roger 1915: 1.

'une description détaillée de la vie socio-religieuse des brahmanes', while the second 'traite de la religion proprement dite.'[31]

So in the first section, an account of the four *varṇas* ('Stammen') is followed by an account of the families ('Geslachten') and sects ('Secten') into which they are divided,[32] (Chaps. I–III) and of those groups distinguished by their renunciant life: '*Wanaprastas*', '*San-jasijs*', and '*Avadoutas*' (IV). In addition to what Dharampal calls 'pratiques socio-rituelles' (ceremonies at the birth of children [VII], at *upanayana* [VIII], at weddings [XI–XII] and at funerals [XIX]) we find described also the daily practices of the 'Bramines' including ritual washing, the worship of the 'idol called Salagrama'[33] (XVI–XVII), and their diet and fasting (XVIII). Roger discusses the status and office of the Brahmans (V–VI), their knowledge of philosophy (X) and the instruction of their children (IX). A chapter is devoted to polygamy (XIII) and two to divination (XIV–XV). Finally, illness and death, including *satī*, are discussed (XIX–XXI).

It is important to note that there was no consensus among European authors regarding how some of the practices dealt with in the first part of Roger's book were to be classified; the dispute over whether they were 'religious' or merely 'civil', was already underway between Nobili and his accusers. There can be no doubt that for Roger some of these are, or include, religious acts. Describing the weddings of the 'Bramines' he mentions the '*taly* [*tāli*] ... a little cord, on which there is a golden head of an idol',[34] noting that it is by tying the *tāli* around the neck of the wife that the marriage is sealed and assured, and that until this is done, the

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[31] Dharampal 1982a: 209–210.

[32] Roger lists six main divisions among the Bramines: 'de Weistnouwa; de Seivia; de Smaerta; de Schaerwaecka; de Pasenda; ende de Tschectea' (Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Smārtas, Cārvākas, Pāṣaṇḍas and Śāktas. Roger 1915: 10). The Vaiṣṇavas he further subdivides into the 'Tadwadi' (Tattvavādin) or 'Madwa Weistnouwa', founded by Madwa Atsjaria (Madhvācārya) and the 'Ramanouja Weistnouwa' founded by Ramanouja Atsjaria (Rāmānujācārya). The Śaivas, or 'Aradh-iha' (Ārādhya, Liṅgāyat priests) 'carry around their neck a certain stone, or idol' which they call a Lingam' (Roger 1915: 13). The Smārtas acknowledge 'Sancra Atsjaria' (Śaṅkarācārya) as their founder, and regard Viṣṇu and Śiva as one, who may be worshipped under different images. The remaining groups are 'heretical', and are followed by very few, because of their evil beliefs. The Cārvākas are 'of the family of Epicureans, who believe that this life is the end of humankind, and that after this life no other follows' (Roger 1915: 14). The Pāṣaṇḍas (a general name for 'heretics') agree with the Cārvākas that there is no afterlife, but are distinguished from them by their immoral lives. The Śāktas are those who 'say that neither Wistnou nor Eswara are the supreme God, but only Tschecti, and that Wistnou, Eswara and Bramma have arisen from him, and exist only by his power, and that the world and all that is within it exists only through him.' Like the preceding groups, they will not be subject to the Veda, and believe only that which they can see or touch.

[33] 'Afgodt, noemen sy Salagramma' i. e. Śālagrāma. Roger 1915: 60.

[34] 'een snoerken, daer een gouden hooft ven een Afgodt geregen is'. Roger 1915: 36.

marriage remains imperfect, even though all other ceremonies have been performed. Likewise, his account of daily ablutions includes reference to offerings and invocations directed to the gods.[35] Also in his first section he discusses the worship of *śālagrāma* images.[36] There are, therefore, no grounds for thinking that in Roger's work the 'religion' of the 'Bramines' is arbitrarily and exclusively separated from their 'manners', still less that this treatment 'does violence' to the supposed 'unity of Hinduism'.

However, it is true that the topics which are isolated for separate treatment in the second part of the work are chosen because they are thought to be necessary in providing an account of 'their religion and their opinions touching the divine, and also the practices and the exercises which they observe in this encounter'. So we find an account of the gods (I–IV), the ages of the world (V), 'angels and devils', i. e. *devatā*s and *rākṣasa*s (VI), the soul (VII), religious ceremonies and temples (VIII–XI), festivals (XII–XIII), the worship of minor gods and *devatā*s (XIV), the worship of 'devils' (i. e. the terrible forms of the divine) (XV), reward and punishment in a future life (XVI), means for obtaining the remission of sin, namely religious austerities, remembrance of holy places, ritual washing, and pilgrimage (XVII, XVIII, XX), the myths relating to the Ganges (XIX), and the after-life (XXI). While close attention to the character and contents of the second part of Roger's work will show that it is best characterized as an account of the beliefs and, especially, the ceremonies of the 'Bramines', without any attempt to give a systematic account of a 'religion of the Bramines', these chapters were nevertheless to play a role in the construction of the idea of such a religion.

De Open-Deure: *'The second part, concerning the beliefs, and the ceremonies of the Bramines, of the Coromandel Coast and the surrounding Lands'*

The second part of Roger's work begins with these words:

> No-one should think that these people are simply like beasts, and that they have no knowledge of God, and divine service [Gods-dienst]. We should rather testify to the contrary. Navigation has taught us, that there is no people so bestial, and so bereft of all reason, or judgment, that they do not know there is a God, and that there should also be divine service. Likewise, these Heathens also acknowledge a God.[37]

[35] Roger 1915: 58f.

[36] Roger 1915: 60.

[37] 'Niemant en heeft te dencken dat dese Luyden t'eenmal den Beesten ghelijck zijn, ende van gheen Godt, ofte Gods-dienst en weten. Ter contrarie moeten wy van haer ghetuygen. De Zee-vaert heeft oock den onsen gheleert, datter gheen Volck soo Beestachtigh, ende van alle vernuft beroofst, en leeft, of het weet datter eenen Godt is; het heeft oock eenen Gods-dienst.' Roger 1915: 85.

Although Roger had given an account of the six different groups among the 'Bramines', and sub-groups among them, his account of religious beliefs and practices includes only the three orthodox[38] groups, and especially the Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas. His account is not monolithic; apart from distinguishing between the beliefs and practices of the Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Smārta Brahmans,[39] he makes the familiar distinction between the beliefs and practices of the common people and of the learned,[40] and he notes other differences in belief (among his Brahman informants) and practice (from his own observations).[41] While he does occasionally make distinctions based on caste,[42] overwhelmingly his account purports to describe the beliefs and practices of 'the Bramines'. Like Lord, therefore, Roger's description is limited to a very specific subset of the inhabitants of a particular area.[43]

The first seven chapters might be considered to give an account of the opinions of the 'Bramines' concerning the divine, in particular relating to the major gods, their 'wives', the lesser gods, the ages of the world, the *devatā*s and *rākṣasa*s and the soul. However, two-thirds of the second part of Roger's book is devoted to 'the practices and the exercises' of the 'Bramines'. The first group of four chapters deals with the temple worship, beginning with chapter VIII: 'Of the Bramines' worship, and the construction of Pagodas'.[44] Where there is a God, Roger writes, there must be worship ('Gods-dienst') and we should examine how these heathens behave in their worship, noticing who and how they worship, and through what exterior signs. On their own account, Roger writes, we know that they worship the supreme God, lesser Gods, and the Devil. However, he begins with the outward ceremonies ('uytwendighe Gods-diensten'), with which they worship Viṣṇu and Śiva.[45]

[38] Roger does not use the term 'orthodox', but notes that the Cārvākas, Pāṣaṇḍas and Śāktas are taken to be 'heretics' by the majority of the heathens: 'Dese drie laetste Secten worden vande Heydenen voor Ketters ghehouden' (Roger 1915: 15).

[39] For example, in relation to funerary practices (Roger 1915: 75).

[40] For example, he notes differences in beliefs concerning 'heaven' (Roger 1915: 147).

[41] See, for example, Chapter XVII 'Van eenighe eyghen-willighe dwase Gods-diensten'.

[42] For example, he notes that mainly lower castes participate in the worship of the terrible forms of the divine (Roger 1915: 146).

[43] There are occasional references to people of other regions as, for example, when Roger mentions two festivals of the 'Malabars' [Malabaren], noting that he does not know the reason for them (Roger 1915: 136), or when he mentions the practice among the inhabitants of 'Bengala' of immersing the sick in the Ganges (Roger 1915: 156).

[44] 'Van den Gods-dienst der Bramines; ende het op-rechten der Pagoden'.

[45] 'Ende overmits daer een Godt is, oock een Gods-dienst moet zijn; soo sullen wy ons gaen begheven tot het ondersoeck, hoe dat sy haer ontrent den Gods-dienst draghen; ende aenmercken wie datse dienen, ende op wat wijse, ofte door hoedanighe uytwendigheden.

Roger lists nine points in which, according to 'the Brahman' (i. e. Padmanābha), consists the service, or worship ('dienst'), of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The first four concern the inward attitude the worshipper is to adopt, giving over his whole soul to God without pride (1), living as a servant and friend of God (2 & 3), thinking always of his greatness and glory (4). A further five points of outward service ('uytwendigen dienst') are required of the servant of Viṣṇu or Śiva. He should be willing to speak of God's majesty, to proclaim his name and his glory (5 & 6). The last three points concern the worship of images. These are explained by Padmanābha as being necessary for true knowledge of God (7), and the worshipper must decorate and give honour to the images (8 & 9). These nine points are the closest Roger comes to an attempt to sum up the 'Gods-dienst' of the 'Bramines', and it is noteworthy that this is not his own summary, but is rather attributed to Padmanābha.[46]

Roger then proceeds to elaborate on the outward ceremonies by which service is offered to the gods. The remainder of the eighth chapter is taken up with a list of the major temples of South India, together with the myths which the 'Bramines' have made up about them in order to increase their fame and their wealth. In the next chapter, Roger gives a detailed account of the appearance of the temples and the major gods to be found within them, and in chapter X he describes the esteem in which the gods and their temples are held. He finds evidence for this esteem partly in customs such as removing shoes and keeping the temple to one's right, but above all in the wealth of the temples, which is derived from offerings and a duty on all goods bought and sold. Finally in his eleventh chapter he gives an account of the temple worship itself, noticing that in the ten years in which he was resident in Pāliacatta he never saw congregational worship. He describes both the daily worship before the images and the festival processions. He concludes the eleventh chapter by noting that he has now described what is enjoined by the last of Padmanābha's nine points.

The remaining chapters of the book continue to focus on religious practices. A detailed account of different festivals, the reasons for them and the myths associated with them, occupy the next two chapters. Roger then completes his account of religious worship by describing the worship of the minor deities and 'devils', i. e. the terrible forms of the divine. The next group of five chapters concern the means by which the 'Bramines' seek to purge themselves of sin, in order that they may obtain 'a good end' after their death. Here Roger describes various religiously-motivated austerities, remembrance of holy places, ritual washing, and pilgrimages. He devotes a chapter to the myths concerning the origin of the Ganges in order to account for the belief in its salvific efficacy. The penultimate chapter discusses those acts which may be carried out on behalf of the dead by their friends, in case their attempts to purge their sin during the time they were alive were not sufficient.

Als wy onse oogen slaen op hare Gods-diensten, soo bevinden wy dat sy dienen (oock selfs naer haer eygen voor-gheven) den oppersten Godt, de minder Goden, ende den Duyvel.

In dit Capittel hebben wy voor-ghenomen te vertoonen op wat wijse ende door hoedanighe uytwendighe Gods-diensten, datse Wistnou, ende Eswara, (welck yeder, volghens sijn Secte, voor-gheeft den oppersten Godt te zijn) dienen.' Roger 1915: 112.

[46] Note also, however, that when Roger refers back to the nine points in chapter XI, he adds that Padmanābha has described them, 'according to the Vedam' (Roger 1915: 126)

The final chapter of the second part is concerned with 'the state of man, after death'. While there is some description of the beliefs concerning transmigration, and the heavens and hells, these are mentioned in the context of the description of further practices undertaken by the friends of the deceased, which are explained by reference to the beliefs. Thus the focus of the previous chapter is continued and extended. With this the main body of the work comes to a somewhat abrupt end,[47] confirming that Roger makes no attempt to give a systematic summary of the religious beliefs and ceremonies of the 'Bramines', and again suggesting that his work may have been placed into its final form by other hands.[48]

De Open-Deure *and the 'religion of the Bramines'*

The idea of 'a religion of the Bramines' remains to some degree inchoate in Roger's work, as evidenced by his preference for 'Gods-dienst' rather than 'Religie'. Even where Roger isolates certain elements of the way of life of the 'Bramines' in the second part of his book, he makes no attempt to give a systematic account of these as 'a religion'; rather he gives a detailed description of their beliefs relating to the divine and, especially, of their 'practices and exercises'. For Roger's editors and translators the idea of such a religion is much more distinct. Sceper refers to 'der *Indianen* Religie'[49]; Wissowatius uses 'Religie' more than twice as often in his brief introduction as Roger does in the whole of his work, and it is

[47] The work continues with Roger's version of the *śatakas* of Bhartṛhari. Caland gives a modern translation of the first three strophes of the *Vairāgya-śataka* to illustrate how much was lost in the process of translation into Dutch via Padmanābha's Portuguese (Roger 1915: 209).

[48] This issue is considered in the unpublished dissertation of Jan Ouvry *"Open Deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom": Perceptie van de Indische Maatschappij en Religie in Engelse, Franse en Nederlandse Reisverhalen uit de 17de Eeuw* (Rijksuniversiteit, Gent 1979). Cf. Rubiés 2001: 242–3.

[49] Roger 1915: xxxvi.

notable that while Wissowatius refers to the Christian 'faith'[50] and to the 'Law' of the Jews, for the 'heathens', whether ancient Greek or contemporary Indian, he uses 'Religie'. La Grue, as noted, most often translates 'Gods-dienst' as 'religion', and the translator of Roger in the English version of Picart makes 'Religion' the first element in the title of his translation ('A dissertation on the Religion and Manners of the Bramins').

For Roger, the 'Vedam', 'the Heathens' Law-book',[51] is to some extent a signifier of religious unity among the 'Bramines', for while the 'heretical' groups do not submit themselves to it,[52] it 'contains all that [the Bramines] must believe, and all the ceremonies which they must perform.'[53] Although he was thus aware of 'the foundational authority of the Vedas',[54] Roger does not appear to have had any real understanding of the Vedic texts.[55] Nevertheless, while the 'Bramines' must submit to the Veda, 'they have very great disputes among them according to the sense of it, one explaining a word thus, and another so' and thus they have recourse to the explanations or interpretations of the *śāstras*.[56] Roger was also aware of other classes of Hindu writings, specifically the 'Poranen', which he describes as 'ancient histories',[57] and of course of the *śataka*s of Bhartṛhari, of which he gives a Dutch translation from Padmanābha's Portuguese. Thus although different groups have recourse to different texts, or at least to different interpretations and explanations of one widely-revered collection of texts, nevertheless the Veda is acknowledged by all as an authoritative source.

The idea of a 'religion of the Bramines' is most strongly suggested by Roger's treatment of the different groups and sub-groups among the 'Bramines' and their compatriots as 'sects'. Despite being aware that for the Śaivas, 'Eswara is the supreme God, and that all the others are under him, and are thus lesser, even Wistnou, who the Wistnouwa say is the

[50] He mentions Giovanni Pietro Maffei's account of a Brahman who converted 'tot het Christen geloove' (Roger 1915: xxxviii).

[51] Roger 1915: 2, 20.

[52] Roger 1915: 15.

[53] Roger 1915: 20.

[54] See Smith 1987: 43.

[55] Burnell suggests that his account of the Vedas 'is, in reality, based upon the contents of the Tamil Vaishnava hymns which profess to give the contents of the *Vedas*' (Burnell 1879: 99).

[56] 'Doch staet te weten, dat over den sin desselven, onder haer seer heftige dispuyten voorvallen, d'een duyt een woort dus, d'ander so; doch tot wech-neminge van soodanige dispuyten, zijn gemaeckt de *Iastra*, 'twelck soo veel als verklaringhe, ofte uytlegginghe, beteyckent.' Roger 1915: 21.

[57] Roger 1915: 40.

supreme God',[58] Roger nevertheless refers to Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas, along with the Smārtas, as 'sects' ('Secten'). One reason for doing so was that Roger was aware that the Vaiṣṇavas acknowledge Madhva and Rāmānuja as founders of their respective subsects, just as the Smārtas acknowledge Śaṅkara. Given that the idea of a larger 'religion', of which the Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and the Smārtas are sects, remains undeveloped by Roger, the question arises why he uses the term 'sect' for these groups. For according to Roger, the 'Weistnouwaes' and the 'Seiviaes' and 'Smaertas' have different conceptions of the deity, acknowledge different founders, and possess different bodies of scriptures. On these criteria, as Stietencron and others have argued, he might have treated Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism as distinct religions.[59]

However, while Roger characteristically glosses the terms 'Wistnouwaes' and 'Seiviaes' by adding that the Wistnouwaes are those who 'say that Wistnou is the supreme God',[60] and that the 'Seiviaes' are 'the Bramines who hold that Eswara is the supreme God',[61] he nevertheless insists that the 'Bramines' are unanimous that there is one supreme God, who is unique and incomparable, and that 'Bramma' created the world. The followers of Śaṅkara argue that 'Wistnou and Eswara' are merely different images under which the same being is worshipped.[62] Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas are also alike in thinking that the gods are like humans, and find the same things desirable. Thus Viṣṇu and Śiva both have consorts, namely Lakṣmī and Pārvatī, and despite being able to procreate 'alone, at their pleasure', the 'Bramines ... according to their religion, believe that Wistnou and Eswara pleasure themselves with their wives.'[63] Likewise, the 'Bramines' agree on the ages of the world and, with the exception of the Cārvākas and Pāṣaṇḍas, on the immortality of the soul.[64] Roger thus finds structural similarity in the beliefs of the 'Bramines', even where they differ on the identity of the supreme being. Moreover Roger evidently found similarity also in their forms of worship: 'each according

[58] 'Eswara den Oppersten Godt is, ende dat alle de andere onder him staen, ende minder zijn, ja selfs oock Wistnou, den welcken de Wistnouwa voorgeven dat den Oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 13.

[59] Ziegenbalg explicitly suggests this possibility. See below, p.113.

[60] 'segghen sat Wistnou ... den oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 85 *et passim*.

[61] 'De Seiviaes, dat is, de Bramines, de welcke het daer voor houden, dat Eswara den oppersten Godt soude zijn.' Roger 1915: 90 *et passim*.

[62] 'Dese seggen dat Wistnou, ende Eswara, een zijn, al-hoewel datse onder verscheyden Beeldenghedient werden, ende hebben een af-keer daer van, dat den eenen seght Wistnou is den Oppersten Godt, ende dat den anderen Eswara daer voor hout.' Roger 1915: 13–14.

[63] 'de Bramines, volgens hare Religie, ghevoelen, dat Wistnou, ende Eswara, haer met hare Vrouwen vermaken.' Roger 1915: 93.

[64] Although they are divided on its origin, some taking it to be eternal, and others to depend on the will of God (Roger 1915: 110).

to their sect is diligent to give honour to his idol and to adorn it with the ornaments which best please the idol.'[65] His account of religious practices, which occupies two-thirds of the second part of his book, offers parallel accounts of the worship of Viṣṇu, Śiva and the lesser gods. He also notes practices in use throughout the regions with which he was familiar.[66]

Despite not giving an explicit account of a 'religion of the Bramines', by isolating for description in the second part of his book certain parts of the way of life of the 'Bramines', and by identifying similarities in their beliefs and practices underlying their different allegiances (to gods, founders and texts), Roger laid the foundations for the construction of the idea of such a religion. This idea was already more developed in the minds of Roger's first readers: his editors and translators. There is, however, no reason to think that Roger believed the 'Bramines' to have a common religion because he misunderstood a geographical term ('Hindu'), or because he was driven to think this by an inherited fourfold classification of the world's religions. What we see in Roger's work is the emerging concept of the religion of the 'Bramines' which, however, remains undeveloped, in part because, for Roger, 'religion' itself was still a partly undeveloped concept. Far from the religious beliefs and practices of India being forced into a preconceived mould of an objectified heathen 'religion', the concept 'religion', and the concept which will later be named 'Hinduism', are coeval. Works such as Roger's played a crucial role in the contemporaneous formation of *both* concepts.

We have seen that Roger's work was widely disseminated, through translation, borrowing and, not least, through the version of it which appeared, seventy years after its initial publication, in Picart's widely-known collection. The comments of the editor of Roger's work in this collection, Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de La Martinière (1683–1743), are worthy of notice for the insight that they give into the reception of Roger's work. Like Lord, La Martinière seeks to relate contemporary accounts of the 'Bramines' to the classical accounts of the 'Brachmans'. In his preface La Martinière tentatively suggests that 'It appears that exactness requires that we should call the whole nation "Brachmanes", and those of the first caste "Bramines". However, this distinction not having been established, we do not dare to hazard it.'[67] La Martinière writes that 'just as a Tartar, who should undertake to give his countrymen an account of the dogmas and ceremonies of the Christians, would be obliged to distinguish between the Greek, Roman, and Anglican churches, and that of Geneva; so, in order not to attribute to all the Bramines, that which may perhaps relate to one particular sect only, I warn that those of whom I speak here, are those who inhabit the peninsula of India, particularly the coast of Coromandel.'[68] In Picart's collection, not only were there numerous different accounts of the 'customs and ceremonies' of the Indians (including Lord, Roger and Bouchet), but also of the different Christian 'sects', such as the Anglicans, Quakers and Anabaptists.[69] The hypothetical Tartar investigator into Christianity makes an interesting return in Anquetil-Duperron's *Zend-Avesta*,[70] and the idea is further developed in works such as Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. What his appearance here suggests is an awareness of the limitations of the work of writers such as Roger, that the 'dogmas and ceremonies' (not the 'religion') he describes may not be part of some monolithic 'heathenism' but rather part of a complex of religious beliefs and practices at least as fragmented and disparate as those of Christendom.

[65] 'Yder, na sijn Secte, is vlijtigh sijnen Afgodt eere aen te doen, ende versiet den selven met verciersels die den Afgodt wel ghevallen.' Roger 1915: 126.

[66] For example the practice of clasping one's hands above one's head in homage to the 'idol' in procession, which he remarks is 'in use throughout the whole land'. ('Dit is het gantsche Landt door een ghebruyck.' Roger 1915: 127). Likewise he notes that the income of the temples is a sign of how seriously the 'Bramines' take their divine service, and that if this is so in Pāliacatta, where he lived, it may be concluded that it is also thus throughout the land. ('Ende staet te besluyten, in dien dat het soo toe-gaet op Paliacatta, daer ick gheweest ben, dat het oock also door het gantsche Land gaet.' Roger 1915: 122–123).

[67] 'Il semble que l'exactitude demanderoit qu'on appellât *Brachmanes* toute la Nation, & *Bramines* ceux de la premiere caste. Cependent cette distinction n'étant pas établie, on n'oseroir la hazarder.' Picart 1723: 19.

[68] 'Mais de même qu'un Tartare, qui auroit entrepris de faire connoître à ceux de sa nation les dogmes & les Ceremonies des Chrétiens, seroit obligé de distinguer entre les Eglises Grecque, Romaine, Anglicane, & celle de Geneve; ainsi pour ne point attribuer à tous les Bramines, ce qui ne convient peut-être qu'à une Secte particuliere, j'avertis que ceux dont je parle ici, sont ceux qui habitent la Presqu'Isle de l'Inde & principalement la Côte de Coromandel.' Picart 1723: 20. Ephraim Pagitt's *Christianographie, or The Description of the Multitude and Sundry sorts of Christians in the World Not Subject to the Pope* (1635) gives some indication of what scope there would have been for the Tartar's work. Note that La Martinière refers to the 'dogmas and ceremonies' and not to the *religion* of the Christians.

[69] Picart, 1737.

[70] Anquetil 1771: 87–88. See below, p.149.

6

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg: Malabarian Heathenism

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg differs from the authors considered so far in that his major works, the *Malabarisches Heidenthum* and the *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter*, completed by 1711 and 1713 respectively, were not published until many years after his death (1926 and 1791, respectively).[1] These works therefore played only a limited role in shaping European conceptions of Hinduism in the period under consideration here.[2] However, Ziegenbalg's ideas concerning Hinduism did reach a wide contemporary audience through the series of letters published by the mission, the so-called *Halleschen Berichte*.[3] The letters in this series dealt with a wide range of topics concerning the mission, *inter alia* the religious beliefs and practices of the 'Malabarians'.[4] Two of the collec-

[1] The *Malabarisches Heidenthum* first appeared in the critical edition of Willem Caland, *Ziegenbalg's Malabarisches Heidenthum* (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, XXV/3) Amsterdam, 1926. Two manuscripts of the *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter* are extant, in Leipzig and Copenhagen (Ziegenbalg 1713). A version of the *Genealogie* first appeared anonymously as *Beschreibung der Religion und heiligen Gebräuche der malabarischen Hindous, nach Bemerkungen in Hindostan gesammelt*. 2 vols. Berlin: Kgl. Preuss. akadem. Kunst- und Buchhandlung, 1791. The version published by Wilhelm Germann in 1867 as *Genealogie der Malabarishen* [sic] *Götter*, made substantial alterations and additions to Ziegenbalg's text, a process taken still further in the English translation by Metzger (Ziegenbalg 1869). The edition by Daniel Jeyaraj (Ziegenbalg 2003) is based on the Copenhagen manuscript and includes its pagination which will also be cited here. The texts will hereafter be referred to as *Heidenthum* and *Genealogie*, respectively.

[2] Liebau challenges the widely-held assumption that an ideologically-motivated censorship prevented the publication of these works, offering several other reasons why Francke decided not to publish them (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 28). It should be noted however that while the mission authorities did not publish Ziegenbalg's works, they did have copies made for other missionaries in Tanquebar (Jeyaraj 1996: 124). Moreover the manuscripts were used by the French Protestant Mathurin Veyssière de La Croze. He drew extensively on them for the description of Hinduism in the sixth book of his *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes* (1724), which was translated into German by Georg Christian Bohnstedt and published at Halle in 1727. La Croze's work was also used, together with further works published directly by the mission, by John Lockman for the annotations to his English translation of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*.

[3] *Der königlichen dänischen Missionarien aus Ost-Indien eingesandte ausführliche Berichte*, 9 vols., Halle: Zu Verlegung des Waysen-Hauses, 1710–1772. This work will hereafter be referred to as HB, references are to the part ('*Continuation*'), not volume, and page.

[4] See for example, the following letters written by Ziegenbalg 'Of the Malabarian gods', 'Of several Particulars relating to Idolatry, &c.', 'Of the Heathenish Books &c.',

tions published in this series are of particular interest in that they are letters written by Hindus to the missionaries, in response to particular questions posed by Ziegenbalg and Gründler. These collections, the *Siebende* and *Elfte Continuationen* of the Halle series, first published in 1714 and 1717 respectively, were distinguished from the other letters as the 'Malabarische Correspondentz'.[5] They consisted of 99 letters of considerably variable length, the majority on religious subjects, although some consider other subjects such as education, slavery, natural history and politics. The letters were selected, translated and annotated by the missionaries,[6] but they appear otherwise largely to have retained their integrity, especially in the first collection of 55 letters, where they are published as complete letters, including the date of the letter and the opening and closing salutations to the missionaries.[7] They are significant in themselves as one of the first substantial collection of writings by modern Indians to appear in print in Europe. The longer letters consist of answers to questions posed by the missionaries some of which are

'Of the Heathen Feast-Days &c.', 'About several particulars relating to Religion' published originally in the *Halleschen Berichte* (HB, 8: 505–605; 9: 662–808; 15: 11–72; 16: 73–151; 17: 153–224) and in English translation by Jenkin Thomas Philipps (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1719).

[5] HB, 7: 337–504 and 11: 871–959. These two sections of the *Halleschen Berichte* will hereafter be referred to together as the 'Malabarische Correspondentz'. They were reissued in 1718 and again in 1735. A selection of the letters (38 of the first 55, 9 of the remaining 44) were recently published in a critical edition by Liebau (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998). References will be made to Liebau's edition where the relevant letters have been included, otherwise to the *Halleschen Berichte*.

[6] The letters are often assumed to have been chosen, translated and annotated by Ziegenbalg. Liebau argues that in fact the translation and annotations are substantially the work of Gründler. (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 26–27). However, as Liebau acknowledges, Gründler used Ziegenbalg's works on Hinduism for the annotations, and would not have dispatched the letters for publication without Ziegenbalg's agreement. We can therefore safely assume that Ziegenbalg would have identified himself with the position of the annotations regarding Hinduism, although he may not have been responsible for the way in which that position was expressed. Gründler is co-signatory to the preface to the *Genealogie*. Even if, as Germann remarks 'Gründlers Name unter der Vorrede ist nur ein Zeichen collegialer Freundschaft' (Ziegenbalg 1867: x), rather than a recognition of his contribution, its appearance in the preface nevertheless indicates the degree of co-operation between the two authors.

[7] The signatures are not published, as the mission did not wish to reveal the identity of its correspondents. The reasons for this are discussed by Liebau (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 16–17). Among these the best documented are those relating to the turbulent career of the author of several of the letters, a high status Śūdra named Aḻakkappaṉ (also called Aleppa) who served both the Danish East India Company and the mission as a translator. He was at various times exiled from Danish colonial territory, imprisoned by both the colonial authorities and the King of Thañjāvur (Tanjore). Aḻakkappaṉ's role in the correspondence was first revealed in the *Halleschen Berichte* some fifteen years after the publication of the first set of letters. See Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 17–22.

directly relevant to the construction of European ideas of Hinduism.[8] The explanatory annotations reveal very clearly how the missionaries integrated what they learned from their sources into their developing conception of Hinduism. The letters themselves are quoted, sometimes extensively, in the *Genealogie*.[9] The 'Malabarische Correspondentz' is therefore extremely valuable in understanding the concept of Hinduism in the larger works of Ziegenbalg. While the missionaries' letters to their Hindu correspondents have not been preserved, at least two copies exist of a printed tract which the missionaries sent with their later letters.[10]

In addition to these letters and his two major works on Hinduism, Ziegenbalg also translated three *nīti śāstras*, the *Nītiveṇpā, Koṉṟaivēntaṉ*, and *Ulakanīti*,[11] and wrote a grammar of Tamil in Latin published at Halle in 1716.[12] The textual basis for his knowledge of Hinduism can be evaluated from the descriptive catalogues of his library. His *Bibliotheka Malabarica* (written by 1708), a description of 119 Tamil books in his possession,[13] is described by Kamil Veith Zvelebil as providing 'a relatively complete account of Tamil literature'.[14] A year later, in October 1709, Ziegenbalg reported that he had over three hundred Tamil books in his library, and a catalogue, written in Portuguese and published in Tranquebar in 1714, lists the titles of 645 works in fourteen languages.[15]

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[8] e. g. 'Whether the Malabarian Law constitutes only one religion, or is divided into many sects' ('Ob das Malabarische Gesetz nur eine Religion ausmache oder in viele Sekten zerteilet sei') Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 90. The answer given to this question is discussed below, p.123.

[9] See, for example, Ziegenbalg 1713: 14r–14v (cf. HB, 7: 346, 380).

[10] The contents of the tract and its role in the correspondence are discussed below, p.118.

[11] *Nidi Wunpa: oder, Malabarische Sittenlehre, Kondei Wenden: oder, Malabarische Moralia, Ulaga Nidi: oder, Weltliche Gerechtigkeit.* Finished by 1708, these works remained unpublished until the twentieth century. Willem Caland, ed., *B. Ziegenbalg's Kleinere Schriften* (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam. Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, XXIX/2) Amsterdam, 1930. Caland notes that Ziegenbalg's German versions were based on the prose commentarial section rather than on the more difficult poetic text of the *śāstras*. The works will hereafter be referred to by Ziegenbalg's titles, i. e., *Nidi Wunpa, Kondei Wenden*, and *Ulaga Nidi*.

[12] Ziegenbalg 1985.

[13] Published by W. Germann in 1880 as 'Biblioteca Malabarica' (*Missionsnachrichten der Ostindischen Missionsanstalt zu Halle*, XXXII (1880): 1–20, 61–94). Ziegenbalg also uses this title when he refers to this work in the foreword to the 'Nidi Wunpa'. The manuscript of another, slightly shorter version of this catalogue describing 112 Tamil works and entitled *Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bücher* is in the British Library (Sloane 3014). An English translation by Albertine Gaur was published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1967.

[14] Zvelebil 1974: 2.

[15] Jeyaraj 1996: 82. Jeyaraj also provides a full bibliography of Ziegenbalg's extensive writings.

Ziegenbalg's works offer an extended and detailed discussion of the religious beliefs and practices of South Indian Hindus, and it is not possible here to give a full account of their contents and of their importance for the history of the study of Hinduism. Rather the focus will be on how Ziegenbalg conceptualizes the object of his study. In particular it will be shown, that the view, outlined in the opening pages of *Heidenthum*, of the relation of different Hindu groups to one another is consistent with that which informs the *Genealogie*, and with the view of both parties to the 'Correspondentz'.

Ziegenbalg's life and Indian career

Ziegenbalg was born in 1682 in Pulsnitz and studied first in Berlin, and then in Halle under the Pietist August Hermann Francke. After some years as a private tutor, he and another of Francke's students, Heinrich Plütschau (1677–1747), were sent as emissaries of the Danish king Frederick IV to found a mission to the king's heathen subjects in the Danish coastal trading post of Tranquebar in South India, where they arrived in July 1706. Plütschau returned to Germany in 1711, by which time Johann Ernst Gründler (1677–1720) had joined Ziegenbalg in India. Apart from one return visit to Europe which kept him away from October 1714 to August 1716, Ziegenbalg remained in India until his premature death in Tranquebar on the 23rd of February, 1719. Ziegenbalg's fame as 'the first Protestant missionary in India'[16] has ensured an extensive literature on his life and on those aspects of his career that are significant for missiology and Indian church history.[17] In contrast, although his major works on Hinduism have all been published, his Indological achievement has until recently received less attention.[18]

Hinduism in Malabarisches Heidenthum

In his long foreword to the 'Nidi Wunpa', one of his earliest productions, Ziegenbalg makes one of his first statements on 'Malabarian Heathen-

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[16] This title is given to Ziegenbalg on the English titlepage of the German edition of the *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter* (Ziegenbalg 1867) and appears in almost all subsequent writing on Ziegenbalg (e. g. Singh 1999).

[17] See Nørgaard 1988 and Jeyaraj 1996.

[18] Recent works on this aspect of Ziegenbalg's work include Dharampal-Frick 1994 and Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998. Nevertheless the desire, expressed by Arno Lehmann as long ago as 1956 'that a monograph be written about Ziegenbalg's knowledge, presentation, and theological evaluation of the Hindu religion' remains unfulfilled (Lehmann 1956: 28).

ism'. It opens with a description of the process by which he came to realise that far from being, as 'most European Christians are of opinion ... a fairly barbaric people which knows nothing of learning nor morality' the Malabarian heathens have 'an orderly written law from which all theological material must be derived and demonstrated' and that 'amongst them, just the same philosophical disciplines are very well taught, which are debated amongst the learned in Europe.'[19] Ziegenbalg writes

> I was greatly amazed by this, and developed a very strong desire to be instructed thoroughly, through their own scriptures, regarding their heathenism. I therefore acquired one book after another, and I spared neither time nor effort until finally I have now come so far, by diligent reading of their books and constant disputing with their Bramans or priests, that I know something certain about them and can engage in reasoned debate.[20]

In this early statement, Ziegenbalg stresses the 'very great extent' (sehr groszen weitläuftigkeit) of their 'heathenism', 'so that if one wanted to write about it in detail, one would need a great deal of time and many volumes for it.'[21] Ziegenbalg was to devote a great part of his early years in India to just this task, the initial result of which was his 'magnum opus',[22] the *Malabarisches Heidenthum.* In the untitled foreword or preface which appears before the contents page and first chapter of this work, Ziegenbalg outlines what appears to be a conventional early seventeenth-century four-fold classification of religious adherence.[23] After a pious salutation to the reader, Ziegenbalg asserts:

[19] 'Es sind die meisten Christen in Europa von solcher meinung als wären die Malabarische heyden ein recht barbarisches volck, das da nichts wisze weder von gelehrsamkeit, noch von moralischen Sitten'; 'sie ein ordentliches aufgeschriebenes gesetz hätten, daraus alle Theologische materien müsten deriviret und demonstiret werden'; 'unter ihnen eben diejenigen Philosophischen disciplinen gantz ordentlich dociret würden, die etwan in Europa unter den gelehrten möchten tractiret werden.' Ziegenbalg 1930: 11.

[20] 'So wurde ich dadurch in grosze verwunderung gesetzet und bekam eine sehr grosze begierde aus ihren eigenen schrifften von ihrem heydenthum recht gründlich unterrichtet zu werden. Schaffte mir demnach immer ein buch nach dem anderen an, und sparete hierinnen weder müsze noch unkosten, bisz ich endlich nunmehro durch das fleiszige lesen ihrer bücher und durch das stete disputiren ihrer bramanen oder priestern so weit gekommen bin, dasz ich etwas gewiszes von ihnen wissen und raisoniren kan.' Ziegenbalg 1930: 11.

[21] '... so dasz wenn man etwas ausführliches davon schreiben wolte, man sehr viel zeit und grosze volumina darzu von nöthen hätte.' Ziegenbalg 1930: 11.

[22] Ziegenbalg 1926: 3.

[23] In his preface to *Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg refers to the German translation by David Nerreter of Alexander Ross's *Pansebeia* (1653), which sets out a classification of this sort (see above, p.53). Ziegenbalg also discusses Baldaeus, noting that in his first letter from India (2 September 1702), Ziegenbalg had 'put more trust in him than those heathens which were around me'. He subsequently found, however, that Baldaeus had 'erred greatly in his description of this heathenism', and that his transcription of names was 'entirely false'. This he put down to Baldaeus' reliance on Portuguese manuscripts acquired when the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from Ceylon. The use of the Portuguese language in conversation with the Brahmans similarly corrupted what Ziegenbalg took to be Baldaeus' own observations (which include those Baldaeus took from Roger). In contrast Ziegenbalg stresses that his own work 'is no pastiche of other authors, but everything that I have written I have either written from their own books word-for-word and translated from the Malabarian language into the German or I have heard it from these heathens' own mouth in their language, in the course of many discussions, and told to me by reasonable people.' ('es kein Schmierewerck aus anderen Auctoribus, sondern alles was ich geschrieben, habe ich entweder von wort zu wort aus ihren eigenen Büchern geschrieben und aus der malabarischen Sprache in die Teutsche übersetzet, oder ich habe es durch vielfältiges discouriren aus dieser heiden eigenem Munde in ihrer Sprache gehöret, und mir von verständigen Leuten erzehlen laszen.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 14–15).

> All the inhabitants of the whole Earth are divided into four main religions, thus there are Jews, Christians, Mahometans and heathens. The Jews are the smallest people and are scattered everywhere in the world. The Christians are somewhat more numerous and have not only filled the whole of Europe, but have also scattered themselves in all the other three parts of the world. The Mahometans are a very large people and have subordinated to themselves almost three parts of the world, and spread themselves everywhere. The heathens constitute the largest people, and inhabit the biggest part of the Earth. Among all these four great world-religions the Devil has at all times proven himself busy in that he wants to bring the souls of man in confusion and seduce them to eternal damnation.[24]

Ziegenbalg goes on to speak of the origin of the Christian religion in God, and its foundation on the Word of God, which was spoken of through the Jewish prophets of the Old Testament, whose promises were fulfilled in the person of Christ. Having accounted for the origin of Christianity, and indicated the role of the Jews in its appearance, Ziegenbalg then accounts for religious diversity in the form of both the division of the Christians 'into so many erroneous sects', and the existence of the 'Mohametans' and 'heathens', by reference to the work of the Devil.[25]

[24] 'Alle Einwohner des ganzen Erdbodens werden sonderlich in 4 haupt Religionen eingetheilet, als da sind Juden, Christen, Mahometaner und heiden. Die Juden sind das kleinste Volck und gehen allendhalben in der Welt zerstreuet herum. Die Christen sind etwas mehrere und haben nicht nur allein ganz Europa erfüllet, sondern sich auch in allen andren drey Theilen der Welt zerstreuet. Die Mahometaner sind ein sehr groszes Volck und haben sich fast drey Theile der Welt unterthänig gemacht, und allendhalben sich ausgebreitet. Die heiden machen das gröste Volck aus, und bewohnen dasz meiste Theil des Erdkreises. Unter allen diesen 4 groszen Welt Religionen hat jederzeit der Teufel sich sehr geschäfftig erwiesen, dasz er die Seelen der Menschen in Verwirrung bringen und zur ewigen Vedamnisz verführen möchte.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 9. Ziegenbalg is the first author of whom I am aware to use the term 'Welt Religion'. I have not corrected Ziegenbalg's inconsistent spelling of the term 'Hauptreligionen'.

[25] 'dasz die Christen in so viele irrige Secten zertheilet worden sind' Ziegenbalg 1926: 10. The 'Mahometaner' are 'under the slavery of the Devil' ('unter der Sclaverey des Teufels'), and the heathen likewise 'all stand under the rule of the Devil' ('stehen ... alle unter der herrschaft des Teufels.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 10).

Ziegenbalg had noted that the heathens made up the largest of the four main religions (haupt Religionen) into which the inhabitants of the world were divided. He qualifies this by adding that the

> heathens are, however, not uniform, rather, although they have all one father, namely the Devil, they have nevertheless divided themselves into many different sects. For different gods are worshipped by the African heathens, others by the American heathens, and yet others by the East Indian heathens, [they] are also very much different from one another in their teachings.[26]

Furthermore, the East Indian heathens 'are again subdivided in different Sects, among which [the sect of] those, which are called Malabarians by the Europeans, is one of the largest.' Malabarian heathenism (the subject of Ziegenbalg's book) is, then, a subdivision of East Indian heathenism, which is itself a subdivision of heathenism considered as a 'world religion'. Ziegenbalg's classification is not yet complete, however, for he adds that under the Malabarians 'are again included many other small sects, and ... many languages.'[27] At this point Ziegenbalg turns to an account of the circumstances under which he wrote *Heidenthum*, and a justification of his decision to do so. However in the first chapter proper of *Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg returns to the issue which is of most interest for our purposes here, his conception of 'the different *religions* there are among these Malabarian heathens.'[28] He begins by writing:

> The Malabarian heathenism is spread very far and wide in India so that many kingdoms, islands, peoples and languages are contained within it. This heathenism is spread over the whole Coromandel coast up to within Bengal: one reads in their books very many histories, which have happened there. Also one of their idols, named Kṛṣṇa, died there in a town [called] Jagannātha. One reads also that many among their saints are supposed to stay in the big forests which are on the other side of Bengal, and have done hard penance there. The whole island of Ceylon stands under this heathenism, as many things are told of this island in their books. From down in Ceylon, this heathenism is spread also on the Malabar coast all the way up to deep within the Mogul realm. Thus this heathenism comprehends all the heathens in the Mogul realm, who worship the same gods although they are

[26] 'Diese Heiden sind nun wiederum nicht einerley, sondern, ob sie gleich alle zusammen nur einen zum Vater haben, nemlich den Teufel, so haben sie sich doch in viele unterschiedliche Secten zertheilet. Denn andere Götter verehren die Africanische heiden, andern die Americanische, und wiederum ander die Ostindische heiden, sind auch in ihren Lehrsätzen sehr viel von ein ander unterschieden.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 10.

[27] 'Was anlanget die Ostindische heiden, so werden sie abermahl in unterschiedliche Secten getheilet, unter welchen diejenige, so da von den Europaeern Malabaren gennant werden, eine von den grösten ist, welche wiederum viele andere kleine Secten unter sich begreiffet, und in viele Sprachen zertheilet ist.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 10.

[28] 'von den unterschiedlichen *Religionen* so unter diesen malabarischen Heiden sind.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 23f., emphasis added.

> otherwise in many parts different from each other and have different sects amongst them.[29]

Gita Dharampal-Frick quotes this passage at length, and comments that Ziegenbalg's 'emphasis on the pan-Indian spread of the "Malabarian Heathenism", leads to its equation with Hinduism as a whole, and as Hinduism in the sense of a geographically-defined religious conglomeration'.[30] Ziegenbalg's reading of texts in which other regions of India were mentioned surely played an important role in the formation of his most general concept for the religion of the Malabarians. However, the statement is immediately qualified in Ziegenbalg's text: 'This whole broad heathenism is divided into two primary main sects [Vornehme haupt Secten].'[31] The sects are identified as 'Tschiwasámeiam' and 'Wischtnusameiam'[32] and, contrary to the impression that may be given by Ziegenbalg's comment that 'all the heathens, which are in the Mogul realm ... worship the same gods', the two sects, and sub-sects within them, are distinguished from one another according to which god is the particular object of worship:

> All those who belong to the first sect take Śiva or Īśvara as the highest God and pray to all those gods which are of his friendship or come of his line ... This sect is the biggest and is divided again into other sects. Of the other gods which are of Śiva's line, some worship especially the goddess known as Śakti which is the

[29] 'Das malabarische Heidenthum erstrecket sich in Indien sehr weit und breit, also dasz viel Königreiche, Insuln, Völcker und Sprachen darunter begriffen sind. Es gehet dieses Heidenthum über die gantze Küste Cormandel bisz weit in Bengalen hinein: denn mann lieset in ihren Büchern sehr viele Historien, die daselbst geschehen sein sollen. Auch ist einer von ihren Abgöttern, Nahmens *Kischtnen*, daselbst in einer Stadt *Tschega-nadum* gestorben. Man lieset auch, dasz viele unter ihren Heiligen in den groszen Wäldern, so jenseits Bengalen seyn sollen, sich aufgehalten und daselbst harte Büsze gethan haben. Die gantze Insul Ceylon steht unter diesen Heidenthum als von welcher Insul sehr vieles in ihren büchern erzehlet wird. Unten von Ceylon an gehet solches Heidenthum gleichfals auff der malabarischen Küste gantz hinauff bisz sehr weit in das Mogulsche Reich hinein. Denn all Heiden, die im Mogulschen Reiche sich befinden, sind unter diesen Heidenthum begriffen und verehren einerley Götter, ob sie wohl sonsten in vielen Stücken von einander unterschieden sind und sonderliche Secten unter sich haben.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 23.

[30] 'Sodann führt die Betonung der pan-indischen Ausdehnung des 'malabarischen Heidenthums' zu dessen Gleichsetzung mit dem Hinduismus im ganzen und als solchem im Sinne einer geographisch definierten religiösen Konglomeration'. Dharampal-Frick 1994: 356–357.

[31] 'Es theilet sich aber dieses gantze weitläuffige Heidenthum sonderlich in zwey Vornehme haupt Secten' Ziegenbalg 1926: 23.

[32] *Civacamayam* and *viṣṇucamayam*. The term *camayam* refers to a 'religious creed or system' (*Tamil Lexicon* [6 vols. Madras: University of Madras, 1924–1936]). Bror Tiliander notes that 'In Skt. literature the term in not used to denote Religion. But that is the case in Tamil, where we meet the word in this sense in Śaiva Siddhānta' (Tiliander 1974: 58).

wife of Śiva or Īśvara ... Others worship especially the god known as Piḷḷaiyār which is Śiva's son and has an elephant-mouth ... Others pray especially to the god Īśvara ... Some worship especially before all others the god known as Cuppiramaṇiyaṉ which is Īśvara's son. Some do not pray to any of the main gods but worship alone one highest being of all beings.[33]

Likewise 'all those who belong to [the second] sect take Viṣṇu for the highest God ... and pray besides him to all those gods which come from his line ... Thus they are known as *viṣṇupattikkārar*'.[34] So far Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism have been described only as 'sects' of a larger entity, namely 'Malabarian Heathenism'. However, Ziegenbalg then states that 'all those who belong to these two main religions [haupt Religionen] are again divided into four sorts which are found among both the *civapattikkārar* and the *viṣṇupattikkārar*.'[35] He then gives an account of the different stages of the religious path, which seems to be taken from Śaivite sources,[36] before returning to the concept of 'Malabarian Heathenism' which he describes as a diverse entity comprising within itself more than one religion:

This therefore is the concept which one has to form for oneself of the wide-ranging Malabarian heathenism if one wants to understand aright the difference between their *religions* and to form an opinion of them according to their books.[37]

[33] 'Alle diejenige so zu der ersten Secte gehören, halten *Tschiwèn* oder *Isuren* vor den höchsten Gott, und beten alle diejenige Götter an, die von seiner Freundschafft sind, oder von seiner Linia herkommen ... Solche Secte ist die allergröste und theilet sich wiederum in andren Secten. Einige verehren unter allen andern Göttern die von des *Tschiwèns* Linie sind, sonderlich die Göttin *Tschaddi* genant, welche des *Tschiwens* oder *Isurens* weib ist ... Andere verehren sonderlich den Gott *Pulleiàr* genant, so des *Isuren* Sohn ist, und einen Elephanten-Schnabel hat ... Andern beten vor allen andern den Gott *Isuren* an ... Einige verehren vor allen andern den Gott *Subbiramánien* genant, welcher des *Isuren* Sohn ist. Einige beten keinen von den vielen Göttern an, sondern verehren allein ein höchstes wesen aller wesen'. Ziegenbalg 1926: 23–24.

[34] 'Alle die zu dieser Secte gehören, halten *Wischtnum* vor den höchsten Gott ... und beten auszer ihm allein diejenige Götter an, die von seiner Linie herkommen ... Dahero werden sie *Wischtnupáddikarer* genant.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 24.

[35] 'Alle diejenige, so zu diesen zwey Haupt Religionen gehören, theilen sich abermahl in 4 Sorten, die allendhalben beydes unter den *Tschiwapaddikaren* als auch unter den *Wischtnupaddikaren* gefunden werden'. Ziegenbalg 1926: 26.

[36] The four sorts of religious observance mentioned by Ziegenbalg ('Tscharigei', 'Kirigei', 'Jógum', 'Gnánum') are the four 'feet' (*pāda*) or portions of a Śaiva Siddhānta *āgama* (*caryā* [proper conduct], *kriyā* [ritual action], *yoga* [discipline] and *jñāna* [knowledge]): 'Together, these four parts constitute everything worth knowing from a spiritual point of view; the section on knowledge reveals how the cosmos is organized, and the other three sections fully instruct one who adheres to that view of the world in how to act in it.' (Davis 1991: 10).

[37] 'Dieses ist also derjenige begreiff den man sich von dem weitläuffigen malabarischen Heidenthum machen musz, wenn man den Unterschied ihrer *Religionen* recht

Having described Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism both as 'the two main sects' and as 'the two main religions' within the heathenism of the Malabarians, Ziegenbalg lists six other 'religion-sects' which his Malabarian informants regard as lying outside their own religion:

Besides the mentioned sects here [i. e. Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism] there are found yet some others among the East Indian heathens, but these the Malabarians entirely exclude from their religion, and take them for heathens, although they take themselves to be a people who have the ancient religion and divine service. Besides themselves they speak, especially, of six other religion-sects, among which some are supposed still to exist in remote lands, some however had been completely wiped out and had been brought to their religion. The first sect are called Buddhists, from whom they say they have their poetry. The second sect are called *camaṇar*,[38] from whom they have their mathematics and other arts and learned matters. The third sect are called Mīmāṃsakas. The fourth, *mlecchas* or the sect of barbarians; the fifth *Wuddaler*, and the sixth, *Oddier*.[39]

Here and elsewhere in Ziegenbalg's works, the terms 'sect' and 'religion' are used both of these groups (taken by Ziegenbalg and his sources to be beyond the pale of Malabarian heathenism) and of the two main groups (*'Hauptreligionen'* or *'Hauptsecten'*, i. e. Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism) within Malabarian heathenism.

Although Dharampal-Frick finds that Ziegenbalg's work shows 'astonishing affinity to "new" positions in the conception of Hinduism', and particularly to Stietencron's questioning of 'the existence of Hinduism itself as *one* religion',[40] she nevertheless concludes that the 'interchangeable use of the terms "religion" and "sect"' is 'unsystematic' and that the term 'sect' itself is used in a 'visibly ambiguous manner, namely first (against the background of schism and sectarianism in Europe) with a pejorative undertone, and otherwise with a more descriptive sense and to

einsehen und sie nach ihren büchern beurtheilen will.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 28–29, emphasis added.

[38] i. e. Jains, cf. below, p.121.

[39] 'Auszer den ietztgedachten Secten finden sich noch einige andern unter den Ostindischen Heiden, aber die Malabaren schlieszen selbige gäntzlich von ihrer Religion aus, und halten sie vor Heiden, sich aber vor ein solches Volck, das die uhralte Religion und Gottesdienst habe. Sie erzehlen auszer sich sonderlich 6 andern Religions-Secten, unter welchen noch einige in entfernten Ländern vorhanden seyn sollen, einige aber von ihnen gäntzlich ausgerottet wären und zu ihrer Religion gebracht worden sind. Die 1. Secte heist *Putter*, von welchen sie sagen, dasz sie ihre Poesie herhaben. Die 2. Secte heist *Schammaner*, von welcher sie die rechen-kunst und andern Künste und gelehrte Sachen herhaben. Die 3. Secte heist *Minmankuscher*. Die 4. *Milétscher* oder die Barbaren Secte; die 5. *Wuddaler* und die 6. *Oddier*.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 29. The last two sects are difficult to identify. Caland suggests the 'Oddier' may be *ōṭṭiyar*, 'the inhabitants of a country north of Madras' (Ziegenbalg 1926: 267).

[40] 'erstaunlichen Affinität zu "neuen" Positionen in der Auffassung des Hinduismus', 'die Existenz des Hinduismus selbst als *einer* Religion'. Dharampal-Frick 1994: 359.

denote the actual differences between the indigenous religious groups.'[41] Before considering Dharampal-Frick's critique of Ziegenbalg's use of these terms we will examine his use of them in other works.

Hinduism in the Genealogie der malabarischen Götter

Already when writing *Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg had in mind a complement to that work: 'I have dealt very little with their idols especially as I intend to put them into tables, where their stories and images may be much more comprehensively handled.'[42] The idea for such a work may have been suggested to Ziegenbalg by his reading of a work he names as Dirigála Sákkaram [*Tirikālaccakkaram*]: 'This book shows the genealogy of their great gods, how all gods are derived from the Being of all Beings, the Highest God ... This book is the basis of all other Malabari books since it lays down the principles on which they are based. Once I had it in mind to translate this work into German but I could not help wondering whether this was really advisable. It would cause a lot of unnecessary speculation and only distract people from more important things. But I am still keeping my mind open whether or not I should do this translation; so far I am not sure about it myself.'[43] While no translation may have been made, there are good reasons for thinking that the structure and aim, and even part of the content, of the *Genealogie* are taken from this work.[44]

The *Genealogie der Malabarischen Götter* is, as its title suggests, dominated by an attempt to provide an hierarchical classification of the gods, rather than of Hindu religious affiliation. At the head of the *Genealogie* stands a table in which the Malabarian gods are divided into four categories, which in turn structure the four parts of the *Genealogie*. In the first category are conceptions of the divine as 'Parāvaravastu,

[41] 'austauschbare Gebrauch der Bezeichnungen "Religion" und "Secte"'; 'Diesen Terminus selbst verwendet er dabei auf erkennbar zweideutige Weise, nämlich zum einen (vor dem Hintergrund von Kirchenspaltung und Sektenwesen in Europa) mit pejorativem Unterton, zum anderen mit stärker deskriptivem Sinn und zur Bezeichnung der faktischen Verschiedenheiten zwischen den einheimischen Religionsgruppen.' Dharampal-Frick 1994: 359, 360.

[42] 'Und in hoffnung, dasz solches einmal geschehen werde, so habe ich von den Abgöttern gantz wenig gehandelt, sintemahl ich alsdann selbige in Tabellen zu bringen gedenke, da denn zugleich ihre Historien weitläuffiger bey ihren Figuren ausgeführet werden.' Ziegenbalg 1926: 16.

[43] Ziegenbalg 1967: 88–89.

[44] For example, the account of purāṇic cosmography in the *Genealogie* (Ziegenbalg 1713: 22v–24r) is drawn from the *Tirikālaccakkaram* (cf. Ziegenbalg's summary of the geographical contents of the work in Ziegenbalg 1967: 88).

which is the supreme being or the highest divine being'.[45] Three such concepts are identified: first, an immaterial, formless and incomparable being; second, a material being, represented by an image of a being containing the fourteen worlds; third, the masculine and feminine power of this highest being, represented as Śiva and Śakti respectively. The next category of the table, or genealogy, of the gods is the 'Mummūrttikaḷ [or] the three greatest gods' namely Īśvara (i. e. Śiva), Viṣṇu, and Brahmā along with their 'wives' and 'sons'. The third category of the genealogy includes the Kirāmatēvataikaḷ, the tutelary deities of villages and homes, and the last the Devas, prophets [*ṛṣis*], servants of the gods and gods of the eight cardinal directions.[46]

Ziegenbalg[47] sought to show that the concept of the Parāvaravastu is evidence that the Hindus are basically theistic, to show 'what these heathens establish of God, the Supreme Being, and how far they have come by the light of nature, wherein they have surpassed the Roman heathens.'[48] The key, however, to understanding the hierarchy is the second category of the genealogical table ('the three greatest gods', i. e. Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā):

> Whoever has a proper understanding of these Mummūrttikaḷ and has learnt to know them by their manifold names and families, can with little effort form a proper understanding of this whole heathenism. If, though, one has no proper instruction in this, he will never find his way in the confusion of this wide-ranging heathenism.[49]

The corresponding section of the *Genealogie* is the largest part of the work, comprising more than a third of the whole. As he had done in *Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg classifies the Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites according to which god or family of gods they worship:

> Īśvara, under which is to be understood Śiva, from whom comes the great religion, known as Śivamatam. All those who have to do with this religion, take Īśvara for the highest God ... Viṣṇu, from whom the other great religion, known as

[45] 'Barabarawastu, welches das Ens Supremum oder das höchste göttl.[iche] Wesen ist.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 9.

[46] Ziegenbalg 1713: 9.

[47] On the attribution of this work to Ziegenbalg alone, rather than to Ziegenbalg and Gründler, who co-signed the preface, see above, p.105.

[48] '... was diese Heiden von Gott, dem höchsten Wesen statuiren, und wie weit sie es in dem Licht der Natur gebracht haben. Darinnen sie die Romanische heiden übertreffen'. Ziegenbalg 1713: 20r.

[49] 'Wer einen rechten Begriff von diesen Mummurtigöl hat und selbige nach ihren vielfältigen Namen und nach ihren Familien wohl kennen gelernt, der kan sich mit leichter Mühe von diesem ganzen Heidenthum einen richtigen Concept machen. Hat einer aber darinnen keinen rechten Unterricht, so wird er sich niemals in der Verworrenheit dieses weitläuftigen Heidenthums finden können.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 42r.

Viṣṇumatam, comes. All those who belong to this religion take Viṣṇu for the highest God.[50]

Brahmā, on the other hand, has no religion associated with him, having 'neither Pagodas [temples] nor worship among these heathens' and being 'honoured only in the Brahmans, who thus enjoy great honour, respect and income'.[51] In the main text of the *Genealogie* Ziegenbalg elaborates:

these heathens would make from the multitude of their gods one single divine being. At the same time they have become greatly confused in this and have forged many different religions, among which there are in particular two main religions, the first called Śivamatam, the second Viṣṇumatam.[52]

Ziegenbalg's concern in the *Genealogie* is with the relation of the gods, and not of their followers, to one another. Nevertheless his analysis of religious adherence is consistent with that of *Heidenthum*, although the focus on the gods in the *Genealogie* leads him to prefer 'religion' as the term for Śivamatam and Viṣṇumatam, and to reserve the term 'sect' for the sub-divisions within the religions. So, he remarks of Śaivism that '[t]his religion is divided into different sects'.[53] Ziegenbalg does however suggest in one section of the *Genealogie* that 'religion' and 'sect' may be used interchangeably. Expressing his weariness with the complexities of Hinduism, he writes:

their theology is filled with so many whims, that one has to spend many years before one can form from it a proper concept for oneself, much less that one could memorize all things which occur in it and understand them. They admit themselves that their theology is like a sea, of which the end cannot be seen. And

[50] 'Isuren, unter welchen Tschiwen mit verstanden wird, und von welchen die große Religion Tschiwamadam genannt, herkommet; Alle die solcher Religion zugethan sind, halten Isuren vor den höchsten Gott ... Wischtnu, von welchem die andere große Religion under dieser Heiden herkommen ist, die da Wischtnumadàm heißet. Alle die solcher Religion zugethan sind, halten Wischtnu vor den höchsten Gott ...' Ziegenbalg 1713: 9r.

[51] 'Biruma, welcher weder Pagoden noch Verehrung under diesen Heiden hat, und nur in denen Bramanen verehret wird, als die da um deßwillen große Veneration, Respect und Einkünfte haben.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 9.

[52] 'Solcher Gestalt wollen zwar diese Heiden aus der Vielheit ihrer Götter nur ein eintziges göttliches Wesen machen. Gleichwol aber sind sie darüber in große Verwirrung gerathen, und haben mancherley Religionen geschmiedet, unter welchen sonderlich 2. Haupt-Religionen sind, die eine Tschiwamadam, und die andere Wischtmadam gennant.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 28r–28v.

[53] 'Diese Religion theilet sich in unterschiedliche Secten.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 28v. Germann adds in a footnote the names of several 'divisions' [Abtheilungen] of Śaivites taken from Wilson's *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus* (Wilson 1846), commenting that '"sect" is not very accurate for the Śaivites' ('Secte ist bei den Sivaiten nicht recht zutreffend'. Ziegenbalg 1867: 35).

because of the many religions and sects there are many disputed opinions among them.[54]

The changes of emphasis and arrangement introduced in the editions of the *Geneaologie* of Wilhelm Germann and G. J. Metzger demonstrate some of the changes in European approaches to Hinduism between the early eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century.[55] Thus Metzger added an introduction which sought to show 'that the religious philosophy of the Hindus, though *seemingly* theistic [as Ziegenbalg had set out to show in the *Genealogie*], is actually pantheistic, and *infinitely* inferior to the practical theology of the Bible',[56] where Ziegenbalg had found that all their books 'show that even after the wretched fall of man those heathens had the Law written in their hearts. This fact manifests itself again and again in their literature, and I can truly say that I have found a much higher level of morality in their books and in their speech than was common among the Greek and Roman heathens.'[57]

Hinduism in the Malabarische Correspondentz

The same multi-level categorial framework for the treatment of Indian religions is apparent in the annotations, probably made by Gründler, to the letters of the 'Malabarische Correspondentz'.[58] Two letters in particu-

[54] 'Wie denn ihre Theologie mit so viel Grillen angefüllet ist, daß einer viele Jahre zubringen muß ehe er sich nur einen rechten Begriff davon machen kan, geschweige, daß er alle darinnen verkommende Sachen memoriren und verstehen solte; Denn sie bekennen selbsten, daß ihre Theologie ein solches Meer sey, darauf man kein Ende sehen könne. Und wegen der veilen Religionen und Secten sind auch viele streitige Meinungen unter ihnen.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 24v.

[55] Changes were also made to the *Genealogie* in its earlier, 1791, edition, the result of which Halbfass writes was that 'a piece of missionary literature was transformed into a work of the Enlightenment' (Halbfass 1988: 49). Thus where Ziegenbalg (1713: 11r) describes the Hindus as having books 'more than 2000 years old', the 1791 edition has 'more than 4000 years old' (Ziegenbalg 1791: 4), which would, of course, make them older than much of the Bible.

[56] Ziegenbalg 1869: xi, emphasis added.

[57] Ziegenbalg 1967: 85. Cf. 'Nidi Wumpa' (Ziegenbalg 1930: 25).

[58] It has been argued above (p.105) that the degree of co-operation between Gründler and Ziegenbalg means that the latter may be identified with the position developed in the annotations even if the former was responsible for their final form. I therefore do not attach importance to the question of which of the missionaries was responsible for the annotations and throughout my discussion of the 'Malabarische Correspondentz' have referred to the author of the annotations only as 'the missionary', by which I intend to indicate their joint agency and to avoid the problem of distinguishing their precise contribution. It will be argued that the position of the 'Malabarische Correspondentz' is, in any case, the same as that found in *Heidenthum* and *Genealogie* which were written just prior to and just following, respectively, the annotation of the first batch of letters.

lar are concerned with this issue. These are the third and the forty-first of the first batch of letters, all written between October and December 1712, sent to Halle in December 1712,[59] and published in the *Halleschen Berichte* in 1714.

In Letter XLI a Hindu answers three questions posed to him by the missionaries 'namely, what Heathenism is, which nations are to be called heathens, and if the Malabarians are not also to be known as heathens?'[60] The author's answer to the first question stresses immorality as well as irreligion:

If one does not love God, nor believe in him, nor go into the Pagodas and to the sacred water; but rather nourishes a sinful mind and heart, and leads a life which is against both heaven and also the earth and contrary to them; likewise, if one goes after whores, is abandoned to gambling, exerts oneself to steal, drinks too much, speaks falsely, takes people for fools and tempts them, mixes together with devils, regards others without any compassion and pity, and is abandoned to other similar sins: all this can be called Heathenism, according to our Malabarian way of thinking.[61]

While the missionaries did not always respond directly to the letters they received, but rather sent short replies or further questions, the definition of heathenism in this particular letter appears to have provoked a written response in the form of a short printed Tamil tract, the title of which is usually given in English as 'Abominable Heathenism'.[62] Before turning

[59] The first letter is dated 2 October 1712, all the others in October or November. They appear in chronological order except for the last, which is dated 10 November. Liebau suggests this should be 10 December, attributing the error to the haste with which the letters were prepared to be sent to Halle (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 275, 27).

[60] HB, 7: 483–484. The letter is not among those reprinted by Liebau.

[61] 'Wenn man Gott nicht liebet, noch an ihn gläubet, auch nicht in die Pagoden und zu den heiligen Wassern gehet; sondern einen sündlichen Sinn und herz heget, und einen solchen Wandel führet, der beydes dem Himmel als auch der Erden entgegen und zu wider ist; item, wenn man den Huren nachgehet, dem Spielen ergeben ist, des stehlens sich befleisziget, sich voll trinctet, lügen redet, die Menschen zu Narren hat und sie verführet, zu den Teufeln sich gesellet, gegen andere ohne eigenes Mitleiden und Erbarmen einhergehet, und mehrern vergleichen Sünden ergeben ist: so wird dieses alles das Heidenthum genennet, nach unserer Malabarischen Art.' HB, 7: 483. At the end of the letter he states that 'the word Heathenism means sin and unruly character' ('das Wort Heidenthum bedeutet Sünde und wildes Wesen' HB, 7: 484).

[62] Jeyaraj suggests that the Tamil title is rather less derogatory, and translates it as 'Unwissenheit, die verabscheut werden soll' (Jeyaraj 1996: 149, 346). Descriptions of the tract, copies of which were rediscovered in 1965 in Slovakia, and later also in Halle, may be found in Gensichen 1967 and Grafe 1999. The tract is described by Ziegenbalg in a hand-written statement attached to one of the extant copies as 'dedicated to the Malabarian heathen', containing 'matters on heathenism, namely what it is; how it has spread in the world; that the Malabarian people in particular are heathen also', and as 'being distributed among the heathen everywhere' (quoted in Gensichen 1967: 31–32). The tract was the first publication to be printed on the mission's Tamil press, which made possible its wide dissemination. It accompanied the second batch of letters sent out after October 1713; a number of the letters in the second part of the 'Malabarische Correspondentz' were in turn provoked by this tract (HB, 11: 923–925).

to the answers to the second and third questions it is, therefore, worth pausing to consider the Tamil word used here for 'heathen', and the meaning it held for both parties to the correspondence.

The Tamil word which the missionaries translate as 'heathen' or 'heathenism' is *aññāṉam* or *akkiyāṉam*, meaning nescience, especially spiritual ignorance.[63] In the tract 'heathenism' is defined as 'idol-worship and moral perversion according to Rom. 1:21–32'[64] thus answering the Tamil's definition of heathenism which the missionaries found problematic as it did not exclude the worship of many gods: 'They do not describe heathenism thus: that it means both to worship no God or many gods. Because they do not believe that there would be found peoples who do not worship any god, and their worship of many gods they excuse with the teaching, that they worshipped through those only one divine being.'[65] The Hindu's understanding of *aññāṉam* as a morally inadequate rather than idolatrous life was problematic for the missionaries as Ziegenbalg's positive impression of the morality of the Malabarians would have meant that he would have to agree that, on this definition, the Malabarians were not heathens.[66] Hence the production of 'Abominable Heathenism', an attempt to persuade them of a definition of heathenism which includes idolatry as well as immorality.

The missionaries were aware that their understanding of *aññāṉam* as heathenism, in turn understood as involving not merely immorality but also either atheism or polytheism,[67] was not identical with the Tamil conception of *aññāṉam*. In the annotation to this letter, the missionary notes: 'They take the word heathenism in its original meaning. Such is called *Akkiánum* [*aññāṉam*] with them and combines in itself all sins and bad habits which originate from reason and will of man. Because *Diánum*

[63] In the previous century Roberto Nobili had used '*aññāna matams* to signify non-Christian religions' and noted a similar expression in Sanskrit '*ajñāna vedam* (bad law), in use among the Hindus' (Arokiasamy 1986: 193, 210).

[64] Grafe 1999: 84.

[65] 'Sie beschreiben das Heidenthum nicht so, das es zugleich darinnen bestünde, wenn einer keinen Gott, oder viel Götter verehrete. Dann sie glauben nicht, das Völcker sollten gefunden werden, die ganz keinen Gott verehreten. Und ihre Verehrung der vielen Götter entschuldigen sie auch mit dem Lehr-satze, das sie durch selbige nur ein göttliches Wesen verehreten.' HB, 7: 484.

[66] At several points in his writings Ziegenbalg acknowledges the high moral standards of the Malabarians cf. e. g. his comments in his translation of three Tamil ethical treatises (Ziegenbalg 1930: 25), and Dharampal (1982a: 222): 'c'est cet aspect 'positif' qui ressort comme leitmotiv des écrits de Ziegenbalg'.

[67] Although Ziegenbalg describes the Muslims as cherishing 'heathen propositions' ('heidnische Lehr-Sätze') and leading a 'lecherous, indecent, sinful life' ('geiles, unzüchtiges, sündliches Leben') (Ziegenbalg 1926: 10), for him they are not heathens, presumably because they acknowledge only one God.

or *Gnanum* [*tiyāṉam*, meditation, prayer; *ñāṉam*, wisdom] means for them wisdom, reason, holiness and is a general word for all good works which come from man's reason or will. *Akkianum* though is the opposite, and describes a wild and rude character in will and reason.'[68] For the Pietist missionaries, *ñāṉam* as 'good works which come from man's reason or will' could not alone suffice for salvation. Thus not only did *añāṉam* not quite map onto the missionaries' concept of 'heathenism', but its opposite, *ñāṉam*, was not equivalent to salvation either. It was this semantic gap which 'Abominable Heathenism' was intended to bridge.

If, in part because of this semantic gap, the missionaries did not receive the answers they would have wanted to the second and third questions ('which nations are to be called heathens, and whether the Malabarians are not also to be known as heathens?'), the answers nevertheless provided the basis for their understanding of religious divisions among the Tamils. In answer to the second question, the Tamil author writes that the Malabarians call heathen 'all those in these lands, who do not confess the *vipūti* and *pañcāṭcaram*.'[69] The author of the letter singles out one such group of former times, who, although like the Malabarians in other ways, did not mark themselves with the holy ashes, and were therefore held to be heathens.[70] These 'heathens' were called *camaṇar*, and the missionary annotation notes that the

> *Camaṇar* were a nation who, apart from the two main-religions mentioned so far, had a separate religion. One reads very much of them in books. From these *camaṇar* the Malabarians have poetry, mathematics, and most philosophical schools. They have, however, been partly eradicated, partly turned to Śiva's religion by Ñāṉacampantar, a young man who had 16000 followers. The same story is described in detail in a book called *Aṟupattunālu Tiruviḷaiyātaṟ*.[71]

[68] 'Sie nehmen das Wort Heidenthum in seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung. Solches heisset bey ihnen *Akkiánum*, und fasset in sich alle Sünden und Unarthen, die aus dem Verstande und Willen des Menschens herkommen. Denn *Diánum* oder *Gnanum* bedeutet bey ihnen Weisheit, Verstand, Heiligkeit, und ist ein *general* Wort auf alle gute Wercke, die bey den Menschen aus dem Verstand und Willen kommen. *Akkianum* aber ist gleich das Gegentheit, und bedeutet ein wildes und wüstes Wesen in Willen und Verstand.' HB, 7: 485.

[69] 'wir alle diejenige in hiesigen Ländern vor Heiden halten, die sich nicht bekennen zu der *Wipúdi* und *Pántschatscharum*.' HB, 7: 483.

[70] 'In vorigen Zeiten war eine Nation, die *Schammaner* genant wurde. Diese bezeichneten sich nicht mit der heiligen Asche. In übrigen waren sie eben, als wir Malabaren, wurden aber von uns vor Heiden gehalten.' HB, 7: 484.

[71] 'Schámmaner sind eine Nation gewesen, die ausser den itzo gedachten zwey Hauptreligionen eine *a parte* Religion gahabt haben. Man liefet sehr vieles in Büchern von ihnen. Die Poesie, die Rechen-Kunst und meist alle philosophische *Disciplinen* haben die Malabaren von diesen Schammaner. Sie sind aber von einem Jünglinge *Schammánda-perumal*, der 16000 Jünger gehabt, theils ausgerottet, theils aber zu *Tschivens*-Religion gebracht worden. Dergleichen Historie wird in einem Buch *Arubaddunálu diruwileiádel* genant umständlich beschrieben.' HB, 7: 484.

The description of the *camaṇar* and the reference to Ñāṉacampantar and the *Aṟupattunālu Tiruviḷaiyātar*, a 16th century collection of hymns of Śaiva poet-saints attributed to Parañcōti Muṉivar, show that by *camaṇar* Jain renouncers are meant.[72] The annotation makes clear that the Jains may be considered 'a separate religion'. The author of the letter in the 'Correspondentz', however, states that this religion cannot be included among the main religions of the Malabarians.

> The question, if we Malabarians are not also to be known as heathens? evokes the answer, that, because we confess the holy ashes and the *pañcāṭcaram* [for the missionary the most important external signs of Śaivite observance[73]], we can in no way be held to be heathens. However, there are among us Malabarians such people, who do not make this confession, and go after their own teaching and rather live in unreason as beasts, also neither confess to this nor that religion, but call themselves at one time so, at another differently, so that they are only according to their name Malabarians, but do not do anything but live here. Of such people can it be said, that they are great heathens. Because the word heathenism means sin and wild character.[74]

Thus the Śaivite author of this letter excludes the Jains from the religion of the Malabarians. The missionary comments that *vipūti* (or *tiruniṟu*, the use of ashes of cow dung) and the *pañcāṭcaram* (the *namacivāya* or five-syllable Śaiva mantra) are the most important external signs of those who belong to 'Tschiven's religion', just as the *tirunāmam* or divine name (the marking of the forehead) is the most important sign of their religion for

[72] The *Tiruviḷaiyātarpurāṇam* ('The purāṇa of sacred sports') describes the deeds ('sports' or 'plays', Tamil *viḷaiyātal*) of Śiva in Madurai. Ziegenbalg had a copy of this text by 1708. It is included in the *Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bücher*, where he comments: 'I have studied it well and copied several thousand words and beautiful phrases from it. The Malabaris consider it a very precious book and wonder how I could get it.' (Ziegenbalg 1967: 86). The twenty-second chapter describes the destruction of Buddhism and Jainism; the sixty-second and sixty-third the defeat of the Jains at the hands of Ñāṉacampantar (Zvelebil 1995, *s. v.* '*Tiruviḷaiyātarpurāṇam*'). The latter chapters are discussed at length by Ziegenbalg in *Heidenthum*, where the *camaṇar* are distinguished from Buddhists and other groups (see above, p.113).

[73] HB, 7: 483, cited above.

[74] 'Auf die Frage, ob wir Malabaren auch nicht Heiden genant werden können? dienet zur Antwort, das, weil wir uns zu der heiligen Asche, und zu *Pantschatscharum* bekennen, wir keines weges vor Heiden können gehalten werden. Jedoch sind unter uns Malabaren solche Leute, die sich nicht darzu bekennen, und sich in seine Lehre begeben, sondern wie das Vieh in Unvernunfft leben, auch sich weder zu dieser noch jener Religion bekennen, sondern sich bald so, bald wieder anders nennen, also das sie nur dem Nahmen nach Malabaren seyn, aber darbey nichts thun, als dasz sie hier und dar herum vagiren. Von solchen Leuten kan gesaget werden, dasz sie gar grosse Heiden seyn. Denn das Wort Heidenthum bedeutet Sünde und wildes Wesen.' HB, 7: 484.

the Vaiṣṇavas.[75] The missionary's annotation goes somewhat beyond what is stated by the author of the letter in adding Vaiṣṇavites to those not held to be heathens: 'Those who now do not confess one of these two main-religions [*Hauptreligionen*], and accept their signs, they hold to be a heathen.'[76] The reason for this can be found in another letter, which would appear to be from a Vaiṣṇavite author, quoted at length in the *Genealogie*:

There were formerly two nations, the Buddhists and the Jains, who had a very pernicious religion and of which there were several evil sects. They blasphemed Viṣṇu's and Śiva's religion and compelled all other Malabars to adopt their religion. Those who would not they tormented greatly. They neither besmeared themselves with the *tirunīṟu*, nor made the sign of *tirunāmam*, thought nothing of the purification of the body, and although they revered images, nevertheless they were regarded as people with no religion. They made no distinction among families [*Geschlechtern* i. e. castes[77]], rather they held all to be equal. Thereby was annulled all respect and esteem between high and low and between wise and unwise. Books on theology they blasphemed and wanted that all people should be in line with this their character and the ones which did not want to approve it they treated violently. Their religion had no similarity either to our Malabarian, or to the Muhammedan, or to the Christian religion, but rather led to the corruption of all. Therefore Viṣṇu desired to extirpate them ...[78]

Thus the author of this letter like the Śaivite author of the letter in the *Malabarische Correspondentz*, excludes the Jains from 'our Malabar-

[75] 'Das Bestreichen mit der *Wipúdi* oder Kühmist-Asche und das Recitiren der Gebets-Formul *Pántschatscharum* genant, und ihre vornehmsten äusserlichen Zeichen, das sie zu *Tschivens* Religion gehören: gleich wie bey den *Wichtnumianern* das Schmier-Werck *Dirunámum* oder göttl. Nahme genant, das vornehmste Zeichen ihrer Religion ist.' HB, 7: 483.

[76] 'Wer sich nun nicht zu einer dieser zwey Hauptreligionen bekennet, und ihr Zeichen annimmet, den halten sie vor einen Heiden.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1714: 483.

[77] Cf. Ziegenbalg 1926: 28 where Ziegenbalg twice equates 'Casten oder Geschlechter'.

[78] 'Es waren ehemals zwei *Nationen Buddhergöl* und *Schamanergöl* genannt. Diese hatten eine schädliche *Religion* und machten lauter böse Secten. Sie lästerten des *Wischtnums* und *Tschiwens Religion* und zwangen alle übrige *Malabaren*, daß sie ihre *Religion* annehmen müsten. Wer solche nicht annehmen wolle, der quäleten sie sehr. Sie bestrichen sich weder mit der Dirunuru noch mit der Tirunamam. Sie hielten nicht auf die Reinigkeit des Liebes. Und ob sie gleich Bilder verehreten, so hatten sie doch das Ansehen, als wären sie Leute von keiner Religion. Sie machten unter der Geschlechtern keinen Unterscheid, sondern hielten alle für gleich gut. Hierdurch wurde alle Ehrerbietung und Hochachtung zwischen Hohen und Niedern und zwischen Weisen und Unweisen aufgehoben. Die Bücher von der Theologie lästerten sie, und wollten daß alle Menschen solchem ihrem Wesen sollten zugethan sein; welche selbiges nicht mit billigen wollten, denen thaten sie Gewalt an. Ihre Religion hatte keine Ähnlichkeit weder mit unserer Malabarischen, noch mit der Mohrischen, noch auch mir der Christlichen *Religion*; sondern sie war ein Verderb aller *Religionen*. Daher wollte sie Wischtnu ausrotten ...' Ziegenbalg 1713: 87v–88r.

ian ... religion'. He does not, however, similarly exclude Śaivas, noting rather that the Jains blasphemed against both 'Viṣṇu's and Śiva's religion'. Taken together the letters confirmed Ziegenbalg's conclusion that Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism are the two main religions of the Malabarians, and that although other religions existed, they were regarded by Vaiṣṇavites and Śaivites alike as 'heathen'.

The other letter among the first part of the 'Correspondentz' which is of interest for our purposes is Letter III, in which the writer answers 14 questions of the missionaries. The answer to the first question is particularly significant, as it provides a basis for the missionaries' reduction of the many sects of the Malabarians to the two 'Hauptreligionen'. The question is 'whether the Malabarian Law constitutes only *one* Religion, or is divided into many sects?'[79] and the answer given is equivocal. Although the writer begins by stating that 'our religion is sub-divided into different sects',[80] of which he enumerates seven, he concludes with the claim that 'the law is not more than one law, but the sects are manifold.'[81] Moreover, while seven sects are listed, according to the author of the letter the first three sects may all be 'named with one word, *Tscháivamadam* [*caivamatam*] or *Tscháivakalám* [*caivakulam*]', that is Śaivism.[82] Likewise the other four 'all belong to Viṣṇu's religion and are different only in their way of worship.'[83] Thus the seven mentioned sects[84] are reduced to two main groupings, Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite.

[79] 'Ob das Malabarische Gesetz nur eine Religion ausmache oder in viele Sekten zerteilet sei.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 89f.

[80] 'Es ist unsere Religion in unterschiedliche Sekten zertheilet'. Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 90.

[81] 'ist das Gesetz zwar nicht mehr als ein Gesetz, aber die Sekten sind vielfältig.' Gründlerand Ziegenbalg 1998: 94.

[82] 'Alle jetzt erzählte drei Sekten werden mit einem Wort *Tscháivamadam* or *Tscháivakalám* gennant.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 93. The sects named are '*Tschíwawédum*' [*civavētam*], '*Wiratscháwam*' [*vīracaivam*], and *Tschilamadám* [*ciḷāmatam*].

[83] 'Diese vier lezten Sekten gehören alle zu *Wischtnums*-Religion und sind nur in der Anbetungsart verscheiden.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 94. The sects named are '*Wischtnuwédum*' [*viṣṇuvētam*], '*Tádduwádimadám*' [*tattuvvatimatam*], '*Námapéramálwédum*' [*nāmaperumāḷvētam*], and '*Tscháinermadám*'. The modern transliteration of the names of the sects is taken from Liebau, who suggests *caiṉamatam* (Jainamata, i. e. Jainism), for '*Tscháinermadám*'. '*Tscháinermadám*' is here subsumed under Vaiṣṇavism, both by the Tamil writer and also explicitly by the missionary annotater, who comments '*Tscháinermadám* is also a sect which belongs to *Wischtnum's* religion' ('*Tscháinermadám* ist auch eine Sekte, so zu des *Wischtnums* Religion gehöret.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 90). The Jains are, however, treated as a separate religion in both the forty-first letter in the 'Correspondentz' and another letter quoted by Ziegenbalg in the *Genealogie*. The missionary follow these sources in excluding the Jains (called '*Schammaner*') from the main religions of the Malabarians. The reason for the inclusion of the *Tscháiner* in Vaiṣṇavism here appears to be that, unlike the other writers, the author of this letter states his view that they do use the *tirunāmam* or divine name and worship Viṣṇu. ('Die *Tscháiner* aus der siebenten Sekte nehmen gleichfalls *Dirunámum* an sich

The reduction of the manifold sects to two main religions is also set out explicitly by the missionary annotator of the 'Correspondentz'. Commenting on the first sect, the missionary writes:

> *Civavētam* is the religion of those who honour Śiva and all the gods who are of Īśvara's family, as the highest gods, in which religion there exist yet many other sects, which the correspondent does not touch upon here. There are among these heathens two main-religions [Hauptreligionen], namely Śiva's religion and Viṣṇu's religion. These, however, are divided into many *religions*.[85]

Thus the annotator of the 'Correspondentz' employs the categorial framework of *Heidenthum* and the *Genealogie*: the two main religions (Hauptreligionen) recognized by the Malabarians are subdivided into smaller groups which may be described either as 'religions' in their own right, or as 'sects' of the particular 'Hauptreligion' of which they are a part. What the 'Malabarische Correspondentz' and the letters from Hindus quoted in the *Genealogie* demonstrate is the degree to which Ziegenbalg shared that framework with his Tamil informants.[86] Ziegenbalg not only allows Tamils to speak for themselves in print in Europe for the first time, he also allows them to dictate to a remarkable degree the terms on which he represents them, including their complex religious affiliations.

und verehren den *Perumal.*' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 94). Either Liebau's identification of the '*Tschâinermadám*' as Jains is incorrect, or Ziegenbalg was unaware that the '*Tschâinermadám*' and the '*Schammaner*' were one and the same. The relative absence of Jains in eighteenth-century South India might help to explain either the view of the author of this letter that they were Vaiṣṇavas or Ziegenbalg's failure to recognize the Jains in this description.

[84] Both the first and the last annotation to the question note that the writer of the letter could have mentioned many more sects (Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 90, 94).

[85] '*Tschíwawédum* ist die Religion derjenigen, welche *Tschiwén* und alle Götter, die aus *Isurens* Familie sind, vor ihre höchsten Götter verehren. In welche Religion noch viele Sekten vorhanden, die der Korrespondent allhier nicht berühret. Denn is sind unter diesen Heiden zwei Hauptreligionen, nämlich *Tschiwéns* Religion und *Wischtnus* Religion. Diese aber sind in viele Religionen zertheilet.' Gründler and Ziegenbalg 1998: 90, emphasis added.

[86] It is worth recalling that much of the *Genealogie* is based upon direct quotation from these and other letters. Nor are questions of the sort posed in Ziegenbalg's letters to his correspondent unknown elsewhere in Tamil literature: 'In [Sittānta Ñāna]ratnāvaḷi 395 the different sects are classified in relation to Siddhānta: ..."The sects are of many kinds, those inside (related to Siddhānta), those both inside and outside (partly related), those outside (heretical), those far outside (very heretical). The excellent Siddhānta śaiva, surpassing them, is one and the same." ' (Tiliander 1974: 59).

'Sect' and 'Religion'

In evaluating Ziegenbalg's categorial framework the question of scale is all-important. The object of *Heidenthum*, Ziegenbalg's first major work, is the 'Malabarian Heathenism' and in the title and introductory passages of the work Ziegenbalg treats it as a single religion, divided into two great sects ('Vornehme haupt Secten'). These sects are distinguished from each other above all by the gods which are the focus of their worship. When discussing these gods in the *Genealogie*, Ziegenbalg's primary unit of analysis is the group which takes each god as 'the highest being', i. e. Vaiṣṇavites and Śaivites. While he usually refers to them as 'religions' in their own right, he notes that they are also sub-divisions of a larger entity, and are themselves divided into smaller groups which may be described either as 'sects' or 'religions'. When discussing the sub-groups listed by his Tamil correspondent, he acknowledges that in relation to each other the sects of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism may be treated as religions. Just as writers at this time in Europe might speak of both 'the Catholic religion' or 'the Protestant religion', and 'the Christian religion',[87] so Ziegenbalg speaks of both 'Viṣṇu's religion' or 'Śiva's religion', and 'Malabarian Heathenism'.

If we are adequately to judge the representational nuances of which Ziegenbalg's account of Hinduism is capable, his purposes or the scale on which he is working must be borne in mind. In her critique of Ziegenbalg's apparently synonymous use of 'sect' and 'religion' as 'unsystematic', Dharampal-Frick fails to take the question of scale into account.[88] While Ziegenbalg's categorial framework is not self-consciously critical in the way that I have argued the academic study of religions ought to be,[89] it is nevertheless flexible enough to allow for different possible ways of categorising and speaking about Indian religious affiliations, including the different ways used by Indians themselves. Although, as Dharampal-Frick writes, Ziegenbalg's 'view of things is not very far from Stietencron's view of the different religious groupings of the sub-continent',[90] it is very far indeed from Stietencron's account of early European constructions of Hinduism as emerging from 'the westerners' precon-

[87] Smith 1991: 41. Ziegenbalg himself speaks of the 'Catholic religion', and the 'Christian religion' in successive sentences (Ziegenbalg 1926: 197).

[88] The criticism of Ziegenbalg's vocabulary as 'unsystematic' is reminiscent of the criticism some European writers, including Ziegenbalg himself in early works such as the 'Nidi Wumpa', make of Indian religions as 'inconsistent'. Such critical comments can usually be shown to arise from an insufficient contextualization of the different statements alleged to be 'inconsistent'.

[89] Chapter 2 above.

[90] 'Diese Sicht der Dinge ist nicht weit entfernt von Stietencrons Einschätzung der verschiedenen religiösen Gruppierungen des Subkontinents'. Dharampal-Frick 1994: 359.

ceived notion that it was *one* religion they were dealing with'.[91] Ziegenbalg retains, at a certain level, a single general category for Hinduism, but as a plural phenomenon. His extraordinary access to textual sources seems to have provided the basis for his confidence in this category. At about the same period another group of European writers were developing, on a different basis, a similar category. The works of these writers, the mainly French members of the Jesuit mission in India will be examined in the next chapter.

[91] Stietencron 1997: 37.

7

Hinduism in the Jesuit *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*

If Sylvia Murr's claim that 'at the beginning of the eighteenth century, all discourse on India was tributary to the 'Relations' supplied by the missionaries, Catholic and Protestant',[1] is somewhat overstated, it nevertheless serves to emphasise the importance of such missionary 'relations' prior to the arrival in India of Anquetil-Duperron, who appears to have been the first European to visit India for purely scholarly purposes. Among Protestants, Murr mentions Ziegenbalg and also Lord and Roger, although the latter were not missionaries, nor writing at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Among Catholics, the main contributors to Indological discourse of the eighteenth century were French, in particular the Jesuits associated with the Carnatic mission, but also the Capuchins Jean-Jacques Tessier de Quéralay and Thomas de Poitiers. At the end of the century another French priest, the Abbé Jean-Antoine Dubois, a secular priest of the Missions Étrangères, was responsible for publishing as his own work one of the most significant works of the earlier generation of French missionaries.[2]

These writers produced a number of significant works on Indian religions, among them the *Relation des erreurs qui se trouvent dans la religion des gentils malabars de la Coste Coromandelle*[3] of Jean Venant Bouchet, the *Traité de la Religion des Malabars*[4] of Tessier de Quéralay, *Le Paganisme des Indiens nommés Tamouls* of Thomas de Poitiers, the *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens*[5] of Gaston-Laurent Cœurdoux, and the

[1] 'au début du 18e siècle, tout discours sur l'Inde était tributaire des 'Relations' fournies par les missionaires, catholiques ou protestants' Murr 1986: 303.

[2] Despite being 'a respected member of the *Missions Étrangères*, a body traditionally hostile to the Jesuits', Dubois's relations with the Jesuits were good, and he supported the return of the Jesuits to Madurai after the restoration of the Society (Ballhatchet 1998: 3).

[3] A substantial part of the text of the *Relation des erreurs qui se trouvent dans la religion des gentils malabars de la Coste Coromandelle* was printed in Picart's *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* under the title: 'Dissertation historique sur les Dieux des Indiens orientaux.' (Picart 1723: 83–100). This is immediately followed by a 'Lettre de P. Bouchet sur la Religion des Indiens Orientaux' (Bouchet's second letter to Huet, XIII: 95–225). A critical edition of the *Relation des erreurs* from three manuscripts, one of which attributes the work to Nobili was published by Caland (Caland 1923). Dharampal, who has used a fourth manuscript, discusses the origin of the work and its attribution to Bouchet (Dharampal 1982a: 233–239).

[4] Extensive extracts from Tessier de Quéralay's manuscript were published in Burnouf and Jacquet 1835. The full text was published in Dharampal 1982a.

[5] Sylvia Murr identified a manuscript compiled in 1776–1777 by a French artillery officer Nicholas-Jacques Desvaulx as a version of Cœurdoux's lost work, and has shown

infamous *Ezourvedam*.[6] However, only the first and the last of these were published in the eighteenth century. Of more immediate impact were the letters of the French Jesuits, published in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* and elsewhere.[7] The Jesuit letters from India had been contributing to European knowledge of Indian religions since the sixteenth century.[8] It will be argued, however, that for a number of reasons it was the letters of the eighteenth century which were particularly important in the establishment of the concept of a pan-Indian religion, which subsequently came to be called Hinduism. Although this analysis is based primarily on the letters published in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, the other letters, both published and unpublished also played a role, and reference will be made to these and to the other mentioned works on Indian religions by French writers in this period. Among the Jesuits who served in the Madurai, Carnatic and Bengal missions and contributed to the *Lettres édifiantes* were Jean Venant Bouchet (1655–1732, in India from 1688), Pierre Martin (1665–1716, in India from 1694), Pierre de la Lane (1669–1746, in India from 1704), Etienne le Gac (1671–1738, in India by 1709),

that Dubois's celebrated work, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* (1816; *Mœurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*, 1825) is based on Cœurdoux (Murr 1987). In his Prefatory note to Beauchamp's 1906 edition, Friedrich Max Müller noticed that the author of the work 'really belongs to a period previous to the revival of Sanskrit studies in India, as inaugurated by Wilkins, Sir William Jones and Colebrooke', although he did not doubt that the author was Dubois.

[6] Among those to whom the *Ezourvedam* has been attributed are, in addition to Nobili, five French Jesuits of the eighteenth century: Bouchet (1655–1732), Pierre Martin (1665–1716), Jean Calmette (1693–1740), Antoine Mosac (1704–c.1784), and Jean de Villette (dates uncertain). Rocher reviews the long debate over the authorship of the *Ezourvedam* concluding that 'the author of the [*Ezourvedam*] may be one of these, but he may also be one of their many more or less well known confreres. In the present state of our knowledge we cannot go any further than that.' (Rocher 1984: 60). If nothing else, this demonstrates the sheer number of Jesuits who had significant knowledge of Indian languages and religions. The *Ezourvedam* was published in 1778 as *L'Ezour-Vedam, ou Ancien Commentaire du Vedam contenant l'esposition des opinions religieuses & philosophiques des Indiens*, but doubts about its authenticity immediately surfaced. Pierre Sonnerat showed it to 'a learned but fanatic Brahman' who convinced him that '[i]t is definitely not one of the four Vedams, notwithstanding its name. It is a book of controversy, written by a missionary' (*Voyage aux Indes Orientales* (1782) I: 215, cited in Rocher 1984: 13).

[7] The letters were widely read, both in the *Lettres édifiantes* and in other publications, for example in Picart's collection in which Bouchet's long, undated letter concerning transmigration (XIII: 95–226) was reprinted (Picart 1723: 100–106). A brief account of the origin, editions and influence of the *Lettres édifiantes* is given by Rétif 1951.

[8] Zachariae goes so far as to say that if Europeans at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century 'were tolerably acquainted with 'Hinduism', with the religion and mythology of India ... that knowledge was attained through the letters which the Jesuit missionaries labouring in India sent to the members of their Order in Europe.' (Zachariae 1921: 151). For earlier Jesuit ethnographic contributions see Rubiés 2000.

Gaston-Laurent Cœurdoux (1691–1779, in India from 1732), Jean Calmette (1693–1740, in India from 1725 or 1726), Jean François Pons (1698–c.1753, in India from 1726).

While Ziegenbalg, as we have seen, had a general concept of a religion stretching from Sri Lanka, up the Coromandel coast to Bengal and deep into the Mogul realm,[9] his primary concern was with the religious beliefs and practices of the Tamils. By contrast, in their letters from around the time of Ziegenbalg's death onward, the Jesuits consistently treat 'the system of religion recognized among the Indians' as a coherent religious entity.[10] While they have no single term equivalent to 'Hinduism', they express the same idea in various ways. Bouchet notes that 'one of the points of the Indian doctrine, is that the gods may be changed into men, and the men into gods'.[11] De la Lane, and Le Caron both offer summaries of 'the religion of the Indians'[12] And Calmette reports the successful outcome of his commission to obtain 'the original books of the religion of the Indies'.[13] Le Gac, writing in 1718, twice refers to the threats faced by converts from Hinduism as a result of their renouncing 'the religion of their fathers'.[14] Four years later, the same author recounts a conversation with a local prince, whose evident desire 'to know and to embrace the truth' was 'mixed sometimes with the ideas of Gentilism', for example his wish to continue to wear a *liṅgam*.[15] Although 'Gentilism' had been used in the previous century, for example by Ross,[16] it is used here, in contrast to '*Christianisme*',[17] to refer to the same entity as 'the religion of

[9] See above, p.110.

[10] 'le systême de Religion reçu parmi les Indiens' IX: 5. Note however, that while the existence of such a common religion is a shared assumption of the Jesuits, they differed concerning the nature and origin of this religion.

[11] 'un des points de la doctrine Indienne, est que les Dieux peuvent estre changez en hommes, & les hommes en Dieux' XIII,147. Cf. the reference to 'la religion des gentils malabars' in the title of Bouchet's *Relation des erreurs* (Caland 1923).

[12] 'la Religion des Indiens', X: 14. 'La Religion des Indiens est un composé monstreux de toute sorte de fables.' XVI: 122. De la Lane also refers to 'l'Idolatrie Indienne' X: 17.

[13] 'les Livres originaux de la Religion des Indes' XXIV: 437. A copy of the igveda sent by Calmette was received in Paris in 1731 (Dharampal 1982a: 247).

[14] 'la religion de leurs Peres' XVI:183, 208. In this letter Le Gac discusses particularly the former followers of a '*Gourou* nommé *Chivalingam*' (204) but his comments about the consequences of renouncing 'the religion of their fathers' refer to other converts from Hinduism as well.

[15] '"Dieu vous à donné un fonds de droiture", lui dit le Pere dans le même entretien, "qui est une grande disposition pour connoître & embrasser la verité: mais à cette connoissance vous mêlez quelquefois des idées de Gentilisme qui alterent beaucoup ces heureuses semences."' XVI: 293–294.

[16] Ross 1696: 63, quoted above p.54.

[17] XVI: 204, 247. Le Gac also refers to 'la Religion Chrétienne' and 'la loi Chrétienne' e. g. XVI: 285, 251. In general, where the Jesuits use 'la Religion' or 'la Foi' without qualification, they refer to Christianity.

their fathers' and in the context of the Jesuits' works is better understood as anticipating the 'Gentooism' and 'Hindooism' which were to appear later in the century,[18] than referring back to the broader concept of 'Gentilism' of a writer such as Ross. The account in the Jesuit letters of the religion to which these different locutions refer shows clearly that they have a concept of Hinduism *avant la lettre*. In order to show that this idea emerged not simply from their preconceptions or apologetic needs, it is necessary to examine the nature of the Jesuits and their missions in India.

The Jesuit missions in India

The Jesuits had been present in India since shortly after the foundation of their Society in the mid-sixteenth century, at first in Goa and the Fisher Coast and then at the courts of Akbar in the north and Venkata II in the south. The seventeenth century saw the experiments in adaptation of Roberto Nobili in the Madurai mission and, toward the end of the century, the establishment of the Bengal and Carnatic missions, based in the French possessions of Chandernagore and Pondicherry respectively. Many of the letters in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* are from Jesuits associated with the Carnatic mission, although crucially several also worked in the other missions, particularly Madurai and Bengal.

The history of the Carnatic mission of the Jesuits begins with the arrival in Pondicherry, in 1688, of a number of Jesuits who had been forced to leave Siam following a revolution.[19] When it became clear that they would not be able to return to Siam, it was decided to start a mission in the region to the north-west of Pondicherry, along the lines of the Madurai mission established in the extreme south by Roberto Nobili at the beginning of the century. Initially the mission consisted of three missionaries, Bouchet, Jean Baptiste de la Fontaine,[20] who had both worked in the Madurai mission, and Pierre Mauduit (1664–1711), under the authority of Guy Tachard (1651–1712) in Pondicherry. Neill notes that '[d]uring the course of the eighteenth century forty French Jesuits served in the Carnatic mission', although '[f]or the greater part of the time there were not more than six missionaries in the whole of the vast

[18] In 1779 and 1787 respectively. See above, p.56.

[19] For the Jesuits' enterprise in Siam, see Tachard 1686 and 1689.

[20] La Fontaine does not appear in Sommervogel. His death is reported in a letter dated 10 December 1718 from Le Gac, who writes: 'The Carnatic mission ... rightly regards him as its founder.' ('La mission de Carnate ... le regarde avec justice comme son Fondateur.' XVI:232–3).

field.'[21] Although some of these missionaries lived into the nineteenth century, the mission effectively came to an end with the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1773. While their missionary labours yielded 'no more than a somewhat exiguous reward',[22] their contributions to European understanding of Indian religions were rather more significant.

Despite the sustained anti-Jesuit polemic throughout his work, the English translator of the Jesuit letters, John Lockman, nevertheless argued that 'no Men are better qualified to describe Nations and Countries than the Jesuits.'

> Their Education, their extensive Learning; the Pains they take to acquire the Languages of the several Regions they visit; the Opportunities they have, by their Skill in the Arts and Sciences, as well as by their insinuating Address, to glide into Courts, where Access is often denied to all but themselves; Their Familiarity with the Inhabitants; their mixing with, and, often, very long Abode among them; these, I say, must necessarily give our Jesuits a much more perfect Insight into the Genius and Character of a Nation, than others who visit Coasts only, and that merely upon Account of Traffic, or from some other lucrative Motives. In case these Mercantile Travellers happen to go up a Country, and make some little Stay in it, the most they are able to do is, to get a few of the most obvious Customs; to describe Habits, Buildings, and what ever else comes under the Notice of the Eye: But as to the Genius of the Inhabitants, their Religion, their Government, and other important Articles, these they can learn only superficially; since they must depend wholly, for Information, upon the Natives, in case they understand their Language; or upon Foreigners who may have resided some Years among them. Upon the Whole therefore, 'tis my Opinion, that the Jesuits, to speak in general, have the best Opportunity of furnishing us with valuable Accounts of many far distant Countries.[23]

Like Nobili, the Jesuits of the eighteenth century spent extended periods in India. Martin reports that his fellow Jesuit, Emmanuel Lopez, had spent more than fifty years as a missionary in South India.[24] Lopez was unusual, but not exceptional; Cœurdoux was in India for forty-seven years, De la Lane for forty-two. Martin himself spent nearly twenty years in India,[25] and several other missionaries were in India for periods of more than twenty years. In every case this is significantly longer than the Protestant chaplains, Lord and Roger, or the missionaries Ziegenbalg and Gründler, both of whom died prematurely.

[21] Neill 1985: 90, 93.

[22] Neill 1985: 93.

[23] Lockman 1743, I: viii–ix.

[24] V: 14.

[25] Martin was sent to India in 1694. He returned to Rome to represent the Madurai mission, dying shortly afterwards in 1716. In addition to his letters an unpublished account of the mission, and especially of the persecutions it suffered, has survived. (Sommervogel 1890–1909, V: 624–625).

The other factors identified by Lockman, the Jesuits' education, success in learning languages, and willingness to live away from European coastal settlements, would all have contributed to their deeper understanding of Hinduism. Some of these were necessitated by a particular obstacle which the Jesuits found they had to overcome if they were to be successful in their mission. The problem was the view taken of Europeans, and therefore also of their religion, by the Indians. Bouchet comments that 'It is not possible to explain how dreadful is the idea which the Gentiles, who dwell in these lands, have formed of the Europeans who live on the coast.'[26] The problem was not simply behaviour which, from the point of view of the Hindus, was immoral, but that they were *mleccha*s, and as such outside the caste system. The Jesuits realized that in the early years of their mission most of their converts had come from the lowest ranks of the caste system. If they were to have any access to the Brahmans it was necessary for them to avoid being identified as '*Pranguis*'.[27] The Jesuits therefore adopted the dress and manner of life of *sannyāsin*s and avoided polluting themselves by such actions as entering outcaste dwellings.[28] Exposure as '*Pranguis*' was a constant concern for the missionaries; Martin notes that it would 'make us contemptible in their eyes, and raise in them an insurmountable aversion to the [Christian] religion'.[29] He writes that the Jesuits in Madurai 'call themselves Brahmans, that is, divines, come out of the north to teach the law of the true God'[30] and Mauduit confirms that this is how they were known.[31] On their own account, in inland areas, they seem to have been successful in this ploy. Martin reports an occasion when he sought an audience with a local Prince to request protection against persecution.

[26] 'Il n'est pas possible de faire comprendre l'affreuse idée que les Gentils, qui demeurent dans les terres, se sont formée des Européans qui habitent la Coste.' XV, 239–40. Cf. Rubino's account of the same problem a century earlier (Rubiés 2001: 220).

[27] *Pāraṅgi*, Feringhee, European. In his *Relation des erreurs* Bouchet states that 'we do not have in our European languages a single term which represents all the contempt and the disgust which this word expresses.' ('nous n'avons pas dans nos langues d'Europe un seul terme qui représente tout le mépris et le dégoût que ce mot exprime.' Cited in Dharampal 1982a: 243). Cf. Caland 1923: 84.

[28] Martin notes that Lopez was 'the last Jesuit who wore, in Madura, our European habit.' ('le dernier Jesuite, qui ait paru dans le Maduré avec l'habit que nous portons en Europe.' V: 14).

[29] 'nous rendroit méprisables à leurs yeux, & leur inspireroit pour la Religion une horreur qu'on ne pourrait jamais vaincre' IX: 126.

[30] 'se qualifient *Brames*, c'est à dire, Docteurs, venus au Nord pour enseigner la Loi du vrai Dieu' I: 17.

[31] VI: 9. The title 'Les Brames du Nord' is still in use in one of the last of the *Lettres édifiantes*, written sometime between 1760 and 1776 (XXXIV: 311). The Jesuits were also known as the '*Saniassis Romains*' (e. g. XVI: 207).

> If he had had the least suspicion that I was of the caste of the *Pranghis*, for it is thus that they call the Europeans, he would certainly not have admitted me to his presence, nor sent me food, as was his habit. One of his ministers, an intelligent man, drew in my presence a very ridiculous portrait of the *Pranghis* or Europeans whom he had seen on the Coromandel coast, and he concluded that my manners, and my way of life, so opposed to that of the *Pranghis*, was a convincing proof that I was not of such a contemptible caste.[32]

Of course it was not always possible for the missionaries to convince Indians that they were not Europeans. Bouchet notes that 'it is evident that we are white like the Paranguis',[33] and that the 'Gentils' argued that as 'the faith and the religion that we profess are the same as that of the Paranguis and the Portuguese', the Jesuits cannot deny that they are also 'Paranguis'.[34] Bouchet's response was to argue that just as the Brahmans cannot be 'reproached for being Parias, although they teach the same sects of Viṣṇu and Rudra as the Parias follow', so '[the Jesuits] are not Paranguis [although they] are of the same religion as the Europeans.'[35] The result, according to Bouchet, was that 100,000 converted from 'idolatry' and became Christians. Many European missionaries in India both before and after experienced the same problem, although none of them went quite as far as the Jesuits in the search for a solution. Whatever the difference this policy made to the success of the mission, the attempt to dissociate themselves entirely from other Europeans in India meant that the Jesuits were integrated into Indian life to an extraordinary degree. Moreover both the practice and the defence of what became a controversial policy were important spurs to study and writing on Hinduism.

In addition to the length of time they spent in India, and their integration into Indian society, there are two further factors arising directly from the nature of the Society which influenced the Jesuits' understanding of Indian religion. Unlike other religious orders the Society of Jesus was not based around traditional monastic communal life. To supply the lack of

[32] 'S'il eût eu le moindre soupçon que j'estois de la Caste des *Pranghis*, c'est ainsi qu'ils appellent les Européans, il ne m'auroit point certainement admis auprès de sa personne, ni envoyé des plats qui sont à son usage. Un de ses Ministres homme d'esprit, fit en ma présence un portrait fort ridicule des Pranghis ou Européans qu'il avoit vûs à la Coste de Coromandel, & il concluoit que mes manières, & ma façon de vivre si opposée à celle des Pranghis, estoient une preuve convainquainte que je n'estois pas d'une caste si méprisable.' XIII: 88. Cf. IX: 233 where Martin reports 'Swami, thus the people call the missionaries'. ('*Souamy* c'est ainsi les Peuples appellent les Missionaires'.)

[33] 'il est evident que nous sommes blancs comme les Paranguis'. Caland 1923: 88.

[34] 'la foy et la religion que nous professons est la meme de celle des Paranguis et des Portugais, et que par consequent ne pouvons pas nier que nous ne soyons Paranguis comme eux'. Caland 1923: 89.

[35] 'reprocher aux Brahames ... qu'ils soient Parias, quoy qu'ils enseignent les memes sectes de Vichnou et de Rutren que les Parias suivent', 'nous ne somme pas Paranguis pour estre de la meme religion que les Européens.' Caland 1923: 89.

regular contact between members, Ignatius had instituted a practice of regular letter-writing, and it is within this broader tradition that the letters from India take their place.[36] What this meant was that the Jesuits in India were able to gather information on religious practices from widely separated parts of India, and thus to recognize patterns of similarity across India. Moreover, the discipline of the Society required that a Jesuit be entirely at the disposal of his superiors, and missionaries could be, and often were, moved from one part of India to another, even if this meant discarding years spent learning a language that would be of little use elsewhere. Thus Tachard notes on being ordered to move to Bengal: 'It was with regret that I left Pondicherry, I knew the Malabar language quite well ... It would be necessary in Bengal to begin to learn an entirely new language; this is not easy at the age of sixty.'[37] Ten years earlier, Martin, having learnt Bengali, had made the opposite journey and had had to apply himself to learning Tamil: 'For it is an order which the Fathers of that Province have wisely established, not to allow anyone to enter the Madurai Mission, but those who have learnt the language of the country.'[38] As a result these Jesuits had personal knowledge, including acquisition of languages, of widely different parts of India; something that writers such as Lord and Roger never acquired, but which Ziegenbalg was perhaps able to replicate through the breadth of his reading. Not all Jesuits had personal knowledge of different parts of India, but through the exchange of letters and other contacts they were able to benefit from the knowledge of their fellow Jesuits. To demonstrate the importance of these factors in shaping the Jesuits' view of Hinduism, we shall begin with the works of Bouchet, perhaps the best known of the members of the Carnatic mission.

36 Rétif (1951: 39) notes that, at least since the time of Francis Xavier, the Franciscans had been sending letters from the east reporting their voyages, but that the Jesuits were the first to do so methodically as part of their apostolate, following the recommendations of Ignatius.

37 'Ce fut avec regret que je quittai Pontichery; je sçavois assez de lanque Malabare ... Il falloit à Bengale commencer à apprendre une langue toute nouvelle; ce qui n'est pas aisé à l'âge de soixante ans.' XII: 367–8.

38 'Car c'est un ordre que les Peres de cette Province ont sagement établi, de ne laisser entrer personne dans la Mission de Maduré, qu'il a sçache la langue du pays.' V: 36–7. Special care was taken in the Madurai mission because of the need to avoid detection as Europeans.

Jean Venant Bouchet: 'le systême de Religion reçu parmi les Indiens'

Bouchet was first sent to Siam, where he remained, according to his first letter to Huet, long enough to learn the language.[39] In 1688, he and other Jesuits were forced to leave Siam. Bouchet went to India, first spending twelve years in the Madurai mission at Āur, near Tiruchirāppaḷḷi, where he was introduced to the principles of adaptation laid down by Nobili.[40] Here Bouchet would have begun to live as a *sannyāsin*. In a letter written some time after his move north to join the Carnatic mission he claimed to be accepted as a *sannyāsin* by those among whom he lived.[41] After the arrival in 1703 of Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, the papal legate appointed to investigate the rites question, Bouchet was chosen by Tachard to explain the Jesuits' practice in part because he had 'applied himself with so much care and ardour to study and to understand the indigenous customs'.[42] In 1704, following the decision of the legate against the Jesuits, he was sent to Rome to protest the Jesuit case. In 1710 he returned to India and succeeded Tachard as superior of the Carnatic mission, remaining there until his death in 1732. Throughout his time in India, Bouchet was in regular contact with other Jesuits, both in person and by letter, and was himself the author of nine letters from India in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*.[43] Two of the longest, both addressed to the former Bishop of Avranches, Pierre-Daniel Huet, are remarkable for the detailed accounts they contain of the Indian gods and of transmigration. It is likely that Bouchet is also the author of the *Relation des erreurs qui se trouvent dans la religion des gentils malabars de la Coste Coromandelle*,[44] written in defence of the Jesuit mission against the charges of Tessier de Quéralay and the Capuchins concerning the Malabar rites, and of other works which emerged from this controversy.[45] Bouchet's

39 XIII, 217.

40 Neill 1985: 90.

41 XIII: 190.

42 Tachard, letter to the Père Général de la Compagnie, 18 February 1705, cited in Dharampal 1982a: 235.

43 I: 55–60; IX: 1–60 and 61–123; XI: 1–73; XIII: 95–225 and 226–228; XIV: 321–410; XV: 1–82 and 209–332.

44 See above, p.127.

45 Sommervogel attributes three such works to Bouchet: the 'Décision des Missionaires Jésuites du Royaume de Carnate' (dated 3 November 1704 and signed by Bouchet, Mauduit, de la Lane and le Petit), the 'Protestation des PP. Jésuites de Pondichéry, Contre l'Intimation faite juridiquement par M. de Visdelou, Evêque et Vicaire apostolique du 15 janvier 1716', and the 'Explicatio Decreti ab Illustrissimo Patriarcha Antiocheno pro Missionibus Indicis lati, quam ipsemet verbo tradidit; datée de Rome, 12 mars 1707.' The first two treatises appear in a work published from the other side of the debate by the Capuchin Pierre Parisot (or Platel) under the pseudonym Pere Norbert, (Pere Norbert 1766, I: 406–8 and II: 221–3).

position in the rites debate presupposes a demarcation between Indian social customs, tolerable in the church and the lives of the missionaries, and Indian religious beliefs and practices. It does not necessarily require a unified conception of Indian religion, but it is evident from his letters and other works that Bouchet did have such a concept.

In his introduction to the ninth volume of the *Lettres édifiantes* Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743),[46] describes the difficulties of gaining more than a superficial knowledge of the Indians' religion: European writers have not been very familiar with the Indians on the coast, or if they have, these Indians have not been well-instructed in the principles of their religion; the Brahmans have not allowed their books to be read by others, in order, says Du Halde, that they can maintain the advantages they have over the other Indians.

> Father Bouchet knew how to ease these difficulties which the Europeans have found in instructing themselves in the doctrine of the Indians: he has penetrated deep into the country, where he has remained for over twenty years: among more than twenty thousand idolaters, to whom he has had the good fortune to administer holy baptism, there are found a number of Brahmans, those of reputation in the country, and who are the most able: through them he has obtained their books, which their learned hold so great a mystery; and as he knows perfectly their language, he has read them with attention: beyond which, in the things which are in need of some explanation, he has had long and frequent debates with the converted Brahmans; in short he has lacked nothing which was necessary in order to know profoundly the ridiculous plan of religion which this people has formed.[47]

Bouchet's linguistic capacity owed much to the advantages of being part of the Jesuits' corporate approach to India. He was first taught 'la langue du payis' i. e. Tamil by François Laynes, procurator of the Madurai mission.[48] Like Tachard, he complained of 'the difficulties of beginning to learn, when already at an advanced age, the elements of a language which has no connection with those of which one is apprised in

[46] Editor of eighteen volumes of the *Lettres édifiantes* after the death of Le Gobien and author of a major work on China, the *Description ... de la Chine* (1735). See Foss 1979.

[47] 'Ces difficultez que trouvent les Européans à s'instruire de la Doctrine des Indiens, le Pere Bouchet a sçû se les applanir: il a pénétré bien avant dans les terres, où il a fait un séjour de plus de vingt années: parmi plus de vingt mille Idolâtres, à qui il a eu le bonheur d'administrer le saint Baptême, il s'est trouvé plusiers Brames, de ceux même qui sont en réputation dans le Payis, & qui passent pour être les plus habiles: il a eu par leur moyen ces Livres, dont leur Sçavans sont un si grand mystere; & comme il sçait parfaitement leur langue, il les a lû avec attention: outre cela, dans les choses qui avoient besoin de quelque explication, il a eu de longues & de fréquentes conférences avec les Brames convertis; enfin il n'a rien omis de tout ce qui étoit nécessaire pour connoître à fond le plan ridicule de Religion que ce Peuple s'est formé.' IX, xiii–xiv.

[48] XV: 226.

Europe',[49] especially as 'at a certain age the nerves of the tongue are no longer supple enough to catch the pronunciation of certain letters.'[50] However, he notes that he had 'the help of a grammar composed by one of our first missionaries.'[51]

Bouchet claims to have read 'several learned Indian works',[52] and he appears to have had access to some Purāṇas, and also the Rāmāyaṇa.[53] He drew his account of 'la justice s'administre aux Indes' from various śāstras.[54] He also mentions the 'Vedam, or Law of the Indians' which 'consists of four parts. But several of their learned men are of opinion, that there was anciently a fifth, which being lost by time, there was no possibility of recovering it.' It seems, however, that he did not have access to the Vedas: 'Unhappily the reverence which the Indians bear to their law is so great, that it becomes by this means an impenetrable mystery to us.'[55]

In addition to his reading, a great deal of Bouchet's information concerning Hinduism was derived from conversations with Brahmans, both before and, especially, after conversion.[56] Bouchet's primary motive for learning about Hinduism was in order to be able to prevail in these debates:

> We have observed that the reasons which Saint Thomas employed against the Gentiles make nothing more than a very light impression on the Indian mind. Thus, in order to disabuse them entirely of a system which is as impious as it is ridiculous, we have recourse to reasonings taken from their own doctrine, their customs, and their maxims: and it is from these reasonings that one makes them

[49] 'dans un âge déja avancé, les difficultez qui se trouvent à commencer les élemens d'une langue, qui n'a nul rapport avec celles qu'on a apprises en Europe.' XV: 266.

[50] 'Les nerfs de la langue ne sont plus assez souples dans un certain âge, pour attraper la prononciation de certaines lettres.' XV: 267.

[51] 'le secours d'une Grammaire composée par nos premiers Missionaires.' XV: 266. Possibly that of Henrique Henriques, begun in 1548 or 1549 (Henriques 1982).

[52] 'j'ai lû plusieurs Ouvrages des Sçavans Indiens' XIII: 97.

[53] 'They have eighteen very ancient books, which they call *Pouranam*. Although these books are full of fables, one more crude than another, according to them they contain nothing but incontestable truths.' ('Ils ont dix-huit Livres fort anciens, qu'ils appellent *Pouranam*. Quoique ces Livres soient remplies des fables plus grossiéres les unes que les autres, ils ne contiennent pourtant selon eux que des veritez incontestables.' XIII:110). He repeats stories from the Brahmapurāṇa (XIII: 195) and the Padmapurāṇa (XIII: 143), and also from the Rāmāyaṇa ('*Ramayenam*. C'est selon eux un Livre infallible' XIII: 172).

[54] XIV: 327.

[55] 'Le malheur, est, Monseigneur, que le respect des Indiens pour leur Loy, va jusqu'à nous en faire un mystere impénétrable.' IX: 39. It was not until shortly before the death of Bouchet that Calmette first acquired, through converts, a copy of the Vedas, which he sent to the library of the French king (XXIV: 438).

[56] Bouchet mentions some of these Brahman converts in his first letter to M. Cochet de Saint-Vallier [n. d.] (XI: 20–26). On his trip to Europe in 1704, he was accompanied by a Brahman catechist (XIV: 324).

feel the contradictions into which they fall, which confound them, and constrain them to recognize the absurdity of their opinions.[57]

While Bouchet has harsh words to say about the religion he describes, nevertheless the Indians were not entirely without knowledge of the truth. In his first letter to Huet, Bouchet writes that:

It is certain, my Lord, that the ordinary Indians do not give in to the absurdities of atheism. They have accurate enough ideas of the divinity, albeit altered and corrupted by the worship of idols. They acknowledge an infinitely perfect God, who exists from all eternity, and who contains in himself the most excellent attributes. Thus far there is nothing more beautiful and more conformable to the notion the people of God have of the divinity. But it is here that idolatry has unhappily made additions. Most of the Indians affirm, that this great number of deities whom they worship today, are nothing but subaltern Gods, subject to the Supreme Being, who is Lord of both Gods and men.[58]

He argues that 'This idea which the Indians have of a Being infinitely superior to the other deities, shows at least that their ancestors worshipped but one God; and that polytheism was introduced among them, in no other way than among the rest of the idolatrous nations.'[59] The similarity between the names of Brahmā and Abraham (and of their wives, Sarasvatī and Sarah), parallels in the stories of Moses and Kṛṣṇa, and a host of other apparent identities, were enough to convince Bouchet that 'the Indians borrowed their religion from the books of Moses and the prophets [and] that all the fables with which their books are replete do not

[57] 'Nous avons remarqué que les raisons dont Saint Thomas se sert contre les Gentils, ne sont sur l'esprit des Indiens qu'une très-legére impression. Ainsi pour les desabuser entierement d'un systeme également impie & ridicule, nous avons recours à des raisonnemens tirez de leur propre doctrine, de leurs usages, & de leurs maximes: & ce sont ces raisonnemens où l'on leur fait sentir les contradictions dans lesquelles ils tombent, qui les confondent, & qui les contraignent de reconnoistre l'absurdité de leurs opinions.' XIII: 200. This was not simply a matter of Bouchet's initiative; Martin reports being ordered by his superiors to study Hinduism on behalf of the order at 'une fameuse Université de Brames' (I: 6).

[58] 'Il est certain, Monseigneur, que le commun des Indiens ne donne nullement dans les absurditez de l'Athéisme. Ils ont des idées assez justes de la Divinité, quoiqu'alterées & corrompuës par le culte des Idoles. Ils réconnosoient un Dieu infinitement parfait, qui existe de toute éternité, quy renferme en soy les plus excellens attributs. Jusques-là rien de plus beau, & de plus conforme au sentiment de Peuple de Dieu sur la Divinité. Voici maintenant ce que l'Idolatrie y a malheureusement ajoûté. La plûpart des Indiens assurent que ce grand nombre de Divinitez qu'ils adorent aujourd'hui, ne sont que des Dieux subalternes & soûmis au Souverain Estre, qui est également le Seigneur des Dieux & des hommes.' IX: 6–7.

[59] 'Cette idée qu'ont les Indiens d'un Estre infiniment supérieur aux autres Divinitez, marque au moins que leurs Anciens n'adoroient effectivement qu'un Dieu, & que le *Polytheisme* ne s'est introduit parmi eux, que de la maniere dont il s'est répandu dans tous les Payïs Idolâtres.' IX: 9–10.

quite obscure the truth'.[60] The idea that the Jews could have taught the Hindus was no doubt given some credibility by the discovery, reported in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, of Jews in the heart of China.[61] However Bouchet was aware that such parallels were not an infallible proof,[62] especially as 'the author of nature has engraved ... [the knowledge of one God] in the minds of all people, and it does not alter among them except by the corruption of their heart.'[63] Moreover, 'beyond the religion of the Hebrew people, which they have taken, at least in part from their commerce with the Jews and the Egyptians, one finds amongst them clear traces of the Christian religion, preached to them by the apostle St. Thomas'.[64] Neill concludes his review of the evidence of Christian presence in India prior to the Portuguese landfall by stating that 'It is almost certain that there were well-established churches in parts of South India not later than the beginning of the sixth century' and that it is at least possible that the apostle Thomas came to India, if only because it cannot be proven that he did not.[65] Although the idea that Judaism and Christianity had anything more than a marginal influence on Hinduism could only have been derived from the evidence presented in India by

[60] 'les Indiens ont tiré leur Religion des Livres de Moyse, & des Prophetes: que toutes les Fables sont leurs Livres sont remplis, n'y obscurcissent pas tellement la verité'. IX: 4.

[61] See the letter of Gonzani to Suarez [Honan, 1704] (VII: 1–29) and the 'Remarques sur la Lettre du Pere Gonzani' (VII: 29–40). What made this discovery truly significant, for Le Gobien, was the possibility that 'by the means of the books, which are in the hands of these Chinese Jews, one could easily determine the truth of what some of the learned have believed, that since the birth of Christianity the Jews, enemies of the Christians, have altered the sacred books ... in order to give them such a sense as best suits the prejudices of their sect.' ('par le secours des Livres, que sont entre les mains de ces Juifs Chinois, on pourra aisément connoître, s'il est vray ce que quelques Sçavans ont crû, que depuis la naissance du Christianisme les Juifs ennemis des Chrestiens ont alteré les Livres saints ... pour en déterminer le sens suivant les prejugez de leur secte.' VII: Epître).

[62] The view that the Indians had received their religion from the Jews, perhaps via the Egyptians, was shared by many but not all the Jesuits. In an unpublished letter Cœurdoux gave a 'critique de l'opinion répandue par un missionare (i. e. Bouchet) sur les parallèlles entre l'Ancien Testament et la mythologie hindoue'. (Cœurdoux, to P. Souciet, 8 October 1739, cited in Dharampal 1982a: 245–6). He gave a more circumspect view in a letter to Anquetil published in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belle Lettres* (XLIX: 668–688).

[63] 'Je sçais que sans un tel secours l'Auteur de la Nature a gravé cette verité fondamentale dans l'esprit de tous les hommes, & qu'elle ne s'altere chez eux que par le déréglement & la corruption de leur cœur.' IX:10.

[64] 'outre la Religion du Peuple Hebreu, que leur a apprise, du moins in partie, leur commerce avec les Juifs et les Egyptiens, on découvre encore parmi eux des traces bien marquées de la Religion Chrêtienne, qui leur a été annoncée par l'Apôtre S.Thomas.' IX: 4. Cf. IX: 277 'the Indian Nations, who, in all Probability, were antiently Christians, but fell back, many Ages since, into the Errors of Idolatry.'

[65] Neill 1984: 49.

someone who was determined to find it,[66] nevertheless Bouchet's speculations again strongly suggest a unified conception of 'the system of religion recognized among the Indians'.

In addition to his letters on religion, Bouchet wrote on Indian law, which he summarized in seven 'maximes générales qui servent de loix aux Indes',[67] and geography.[68] Regarding the latter, Bouchet's interests mean that most attention is given to the religious geography of India, and especially to important temples and pilgrimage sites.[69] In this letter his conception of the pan-Indian spread of 'the system of religion recognized among the Indians'[70] is apparent in his treatment of two holy sites, the city of Vārānasī and the island of Rāmeśvaram. Pilgrimage sites had been noted by other Jesuits and may have contributed to their conception of a widely-shared religious tradition. For example Tachard noted the large numbers of 'pilgrims who come to Jagganātha [i. e. Purī] from throughout India'.[71] Although Bouchet also remarks that 'Jagannātha is celebrated for its temple' he finds 'that this temple is little known in the southern parts of India'[72] where instead 'the Indians praise extremely the town of Kāśī which is towards the north, and Rāmeśvaram which is towards the south'.[73] Bouchet correctly believes Kāśī to be the same town as 'Banare' [Benares, Vārānasī]. He proves his point by referring to the reports of Europeans who have travelled there whose description 'conforms to what the Indians report of the temple of Kāśī'.[74] Of the pilgrimage island of Rāmeśvaram,[75] on the other hand, Bouchet can speak with more certainty, having once spent ten days there: 'The temple appeared to me less beautiful and smaller than many others in these lands' and Bouchet believes that it owes its fame to the purifying effect

[66] The role of the Brahman converts, the Jesuits' primary source of information on Indian religions, should not be overlooked.

[67] Bouchet to Cochet de Saint Vallier, Pondicherry, 1714 (XIV: 410).

[68] The discussion occurs in a letter to another Jesuit sent from Pondicherry, and dated 1 April 1719 (XV: 1–82).

[69] In addition to sites of importance for Hindus Bouchet knew that Sri Lanka was important for the Siamese and the Chinese: 'The Siamese say that the god *Somonocodon* [i. e. the Buddha] has one of his footprints on the island [Sri Lanka]. The Chinese ... assert that one of their principal idols came from Ceylon.' ('Les Siamois disent que leur Dieu *Somonocodon* a un de ses pieds marqué dans l'Isle. Les Chinois ... avouent qu'un de leurs principales Idoles est venuë de Ceylan.' XV: 41–42).

[70] 'le systême de Religion reçu parmi les Indiens' IX: 5.

[71] 'des Pélerins qui viennent à Jagrenat de toute l'Inde' XII: 433.

[72] '*Jagrenat* est célebre pas son Pagode ... Ce qu'il y a de certain, c'est que ce Pagode est peu connu dans les parties Meridionales de l'Inde' XV: 28.

[73] 'les Indiens vantent extrêment la Ville de *Cachi* qui est vers le Nord, & *Ramanancor* qui est vers le Sud' XV: 49–50.

[74] 'Europeans qui y ont voyagé ... conforme à ce que les Indiens rapportent du Pagode de *Cachi*' XV: 54–55.

[75] '*Ramanancor*, que les Indiens appellent *Rameissouram*' XV: 55.

which the idolaters attribute to bathing in the sea, especially during eclipses.[76] Bouchet notes that the Indians regard these sites as 'the two poles of their geography'.[77] Thus although he had personal knowledge only of the south, by combining the information he had from his Indian interlocutors with that from other Jesuits he formed a concept of a religion embracing a much wider area.

Hindu diversity in the Jesuit Lettres

Although Bouchet treats the religion of the 'Indians' (or alternatively, the 'Gentils', both understood in opposition to the 'Mores' [Moors, Muslims]) he knew as essentially the same phenomenon as that reported in the letters of Jesuits from elsewhere in India, he was nevertheless aware of distinct groups within Hinduism. Thus he reports differences among the Indians in their beliefs concerning the soul, for example on the question of how the soul is related to the deity.[78] One of the reasons for the Jesuits' interest in divisions among the Indians on religion was that they were able to use for their own purposes the arguments that different Indian groups used against each other. Thus Bouchet charges the vegetarian Brahmans: 'You Brahmans are infinitely more guilty than any other caste that makes use of flesh: for, in killing a sheep, for instance, they commit but one single murder, instead of which you pluck up every day a large quantity of herbs, which you dress, and thereby become guilty of innumerable murders.'[79] Roger reports this argument being put to Brahmans by meat-eating Śūdras.[80]

The Jesuits were also aware of the divisions between Vaiṣṇavites and Śaivites. De la Lane, for example, notes that 'Viṣṇu and Śiva ... are regarded as the two principal divinities, and divide the Indians into two

[76] 'Le Pagode m'a paru moins beau & plus petit que plusiers autres qui sont dans les terres: je croy qu'il n'est si fort estimé qu'à cause du bain qu'on prendre dans le mer; car les Idolâtres sont persuadez que ce bain efface entierement les pechez, sur tout si on le prend le temps des Eclypses du Soleil & de la Lune.' XV: 56. The Ramanatha temple complex on Rāmeśvaram was perhaps at the height of its fame during the first half of the eighteenth century, during which time it was greatly extended under the patronage of the rulers of Ramanathapuram (Michell 1995: 116–118).

[77] 'les deux pôles de leur Geographie' XV: 49–50.

[78] XIII: 150–151, cf. XIII: 175 ('Les sentimens des Indiens sont partagez'), 203–4 ('ils soient partagez sur cela en deux opinions différentes').

[79] 'Vous autres Brames, vous estes infiniment plus coupables que ceux des autres Castes que usent de viande: car en tuant un mouton, par exemple, ils ne sont qu'un meurtre au lieu que vous qui arrachez tous les jours une si grande quantité d'herbes que vous faites cuire, se sont autant de meurtres que vous faites.' XIII: 216.

[80] Roger 1915: 70.

different sects.'[81] The former are referred to as '*Vichnouvistes*' [Vaiṣṇavites], and the latter usually as '*Linganists* [*Liṅgāyats*]'.[82] It was however Jean François Pons[83] who, in a remarkable letter of 1740, gave the most detailed account of diversity in the religious philosophy of the Indians:

As among the Greeks there were numerous schools of philosophy, the Ionic, the Academic, &c. there were in antiquity among the Brahmans, six principal philosophical schools, or sects, which were each distinguished from the others by some particular conception of blessedness and on the means of attaining to it, *Nyāya*, *Vedānta*, *Sāṃkhya*, Mīmāṃsā, *Patañjali* [i. e. Yoga], *bhāṣya* ['commentary', presumably Vaiśeṣika is meant], are those they call simply the six sciences, which are nothing but six sects or schools. There are among them numerous others such as the *āgamaśāstram* [i. e. Jains] & *Bauddhamatam* [i. e. Buddhism], &c. which are as much as heresies in matters of religion, very opposed to the *dharmaśāstram* of which I have spoken, which contains the universally approved polytheism.[84]

A distinction between 'popular' and 'philosophical' Hinduism is drawn by many European writers, both before and after the authors of the *Lettres édifiantes*. However, Pons was the first to establish the distinction on the basis of different textual sources:

That which, after the nobility of their caste, raises [the Brahmans] infinitely above the vulgar, is the knowledge of religion, mathematics, and philosophy. Although they are the ministers of the people, the Brahmans practise their religion separately ... The *Vedam* contains the theology of the Brahmans, and the ancient *Purāṇam* or poems, the popular theology.[85]

Pons even suggests that 'popular' and 'Brahmanic' Hinduism may be considered two different 'theologies' or 'religions':

The two theologies Brahmanic and popular, make up the sacred science, or science of virtue, *dharmaśāstram*, which contains the practice of the different *religions*, the sacred (or superstitious) and civil (or profane) rites, with the laws for the administration of justice.[86]

Pons also knew that the Brahmans belonged to different schools of Vedic transmission, and notes that the '*Roukou Vedam*, or according to the Hindustan pronunciation, *Recbed*, and the *Yajourvedam*, are most followed in the peninsula between the two seas; the *Sâmavedam* & *Lartharvana* or *Brahmavedam*, in the North.'[87] Pons had worked in both Bengal and Tanjore, and his observation of this distinction between the north and the south was therefore made on the basis of personal experience. Likewise Calmette realized that *advaitins* were more numerous in the north than in the south.[88] Martin writes that 'there is a sect of people

[81] '*Vichnou & Chiven* ... sont regardez comme les deux principales Divinités, & ... partagent [les] Indiens en deux sectes différentes.' X: 19. Cf. Le Gac 'les differentes Sectes de ce Payis' XVI: 248.

[82] e. g. 'les Brames, soit *Vichnouvistes*, soit Linganistes' XVI: 240, 'la secte infame des *Liganistes* [*sic*]' XIII: 138.

[83] Pons was born in 1698 and died before 1754. He was sent to India in 1726. His letter of 1740 (XXVI: 218–256) is his only contribution to the *Lettres*. Sommervogel attributes to him an unpublished Sanskrit Grammar, and a treatise on Sanskrit poetry sent to Europe in 1739. (Sommervogel 1890–1909 VI: 999).

[84] 'Comme parmi les Grecs il y eut plusiers Ecoles de Philosophie, l'Ionique, l'Académique, &c. il y a eu dans l'Antiquité parmi les Brahmanes, six principales Ecoles, où Sectes Philosophiques, dont chacune étoit distinguée des autres par quelque sentiment particulier sur la félicité & sur les moyens d'y parvenir, *Nyâyam, Vedântam, Sankiam, Mimamsa, Pâtanjalam, bhassyam*, sont ce qu'ils appellent simplement les six Sciences, qui ne sont que six Sectes ou écoles. Il y en a entre plusiers autres comme *l'âgamchâstram & Bauddamatham*, &c. qui sont autant d'hérésies en matiere de Religion, très-opposées au *d'Harmachâstram* dont j'ai parlé, qui contient le *polythéisme* universellement approuvé.' XXVI: 239. Pons identifies 'Bouddha' as 'the *Photo* revered by the people of China' and notes that 'the Bauddhistes are the sects of the Bonzes and Lamas' (240).

[85] 'Ce qui, après la Noblesse de leur Caste, les éléve infiniment au-dessus du Vulgaire, c'est la science de la Religion, des Mathématiques, & la Philosophie. Les Brahmanes ont leur Religion à part, ils sont cependent les Ministres de celle du Peuple ... Les *Vedam* renferment la Théologie des Brahmanes; & les Anciens *Pouranam* ou Poëmes la Théologie Populaire.' XXVI: 223.

[86] 'Des deux Théologies Brahmanique & Populaire, on a composé la Science Sainte ou de la vertu, *d'Harmachâstram*, qui contient le practique des différentes *Religions*, des Rits Sacrés ou Superstitieux, Civils, ou Prophanes, avec les Loix pour l'administration de la Justice.' XXIV: 234–235, emphasis added.

[87] '*Roukou Vedam*, où, selon la prononciation Indoustane, *Recbed* & le *Yajourvedam*, sont plus suivis dans le Péninsule entre les deux Mers. Le *Sâmavedam* & *Lartharvana* ou *Brahmavedam* dans le Nord.' XXVI: 223.

[88] 'Il y a une de leurs Sectes moins répandue ici que dans le Nord, qui reconnoît en Dieu le connoissance & de l'amour. On la nomme la Secte de ceux qui admettent des distinctions en Dieu, pas opposition à celles des *Vedantoulou*, qui rejette ces distinctions, en disant que cette connoissance & cet amour ne sont autre chose que Dieu même, sans s'appercevoir qu'ils ont raison de part & d'autre, & que la vérité se trouve dans l'union de ces deux sentimens.' XXIV: 442. Calmette seems to have been well acquainted with the Upaniṣads; he suggests, on the basis of 'difference of language and style', that the 'last books of the Vedam ... are later than the first by more than five centuries.' ('[Les] derniers Livres du *Vedam*, qui par la différence de la Langue & du style, sont postérieurs aux premiers de plus de cinq siécles.' XXIV: 439). Le Gac also noted that the 'Aduidam' (*advaitins*) were the more common of the 'two different opinions which divide the learned Brahmans of India.' ('[Il y a] deux differentes opinions qui partagent les sçavans Brames de l'Inde. La premiere s'appelle *Aduidam*, & elle est la plus commune. On nomme la seconde *Duidam*.' XIV: 310).

who, it appears, profess not to acknowledge any Deity; they are called *Nāstika* but this sect has very few supporters.'[89]

It is both a consequence and a sign of the genuine advances that the Jesuits made in understanding Hinduism that they were acutely aware of how little was really understood.[90] Pons writes that

> The only means of penetrating into Indian antiquity, above all in that which concerns history, is to have a strong taste for that science, to acquire a perfect knowledge of Sanskrit, to spend a king's ransom; until these three qualities are found united in the same subject, with the health necessary in order to sustain study in India, nothing will be known, or almost nothing of the ancient history of this vast kingdom.[91]

Pons' understanding was far advanced for his time; he identified 'Fo, revered by the people of China' as the Buddha and connected the Buddhists 'of the sect of the Bonzes and the Lamas' with the Buddhists reviled as atheists in India.[92] In addition to naming six *darśanas*, he gave detailed accounts of Nyāya, Vedānta, and Sāṃkhya.[93] His work was not surpassed until Henry Thomas Colebrooke's *Essay on the Philosophy of the Hindus* (1823–27) in the following century. Nevertheless Pons writes: 'I am not quite *au fait* with the systems of the other schools: that which I note for you here, is itself not to be regarded as more than a draft, to which the most able hand will certainly have much to add, and perhaps much to retract. It satisfies me to have made known to you that India is a country where many new discoveries can be made.'[94] The confidence

[89] 'il y a une Secte de gens qui sont, ce semble, profession de ne reconnoître aucune Divinité, & qu'on appelle *Naxtagher*, mais cette Secte à très peu de Partisans.' X: 96.

[90] Cf. De la Lane: 'All the books which I have seen suppose the immortality of the soul; though I cannot guarantee that this is the opinion of the numerous sects, nor of many Brahmans. At bottom, their ideas on all these things are so unclear that is it not easy to determine what they think.' ('Tous les livres que j'ay vûs supposent l'immortalité de l'ame; je ne voudrois pas pourtant garantir que ce soit l'opinion de plusiers sectes, non plus de plusiers Bramins. Mais au fonds ils ont des idées si peu nettes sur toutes ces choses qu'il n'est pas aisé de bien démêler ce qu'ils pensent.' X: 21–22).

[91] 'Le seul moyen de pénétrer dans l'Antiquité Indienne, surtout en ce qui concerne l'Histoire, c'est d'avoir un grand goût pour cette science, d'acquérir une connoissance parfaite du *Samskret*, & de faire des dépenses ausquelles il n'y a qu'un grand Prince qui puisse fournir; jusqu'à ce que ces trois choses se trouvent réunies dans un même sujet, avec la santé nécessaire pour soutenir l'étude dans l'Inde, on ne sçaura rien, où presque rien de l'Histoire ancienne de ce vaste Royaume.' XXVI: 231–2.

[92] 'Les Bauddistes ... sont accusés d'Athéisme ... Boudda est le *Photo* révéré par le Peuple à la Chine, & les Bauddistes sont de la Secte des Bonzes & des Lamas' XXVI: 240.

[93] 'L'Ecole de *Nyâyam, raison jugement* [ou] la Logique', 'L'Ecole de *Vedântam*, fin de la Loi' and 'L'Ecole de *Sankiam, numérique* fondée par Kapil' XXVI: 242f., 247f., 252f.

[94] 'Je ne suis pas assez au fait des systêmes des autres Ecoles: ce que je vous marque ici, ne doit même être regardé que comme une ébauche à laquelle une main plus habile auroit bien des traits à ajoûter, & peut-être plusieurs à retrancher. Il me suffit de vous faire connoître que l'Inde est un pays, où il se peut faire encore beaucoup de nouvelles découvertes.' XXVI: 256.

expressed by Pons was not misplaced; in 1767, three years after Louis XIV had ordered the disbanding of the Jesuits in French territory (including Pondicherry), one of the last remaining Jesuits in India, Gaston-Laurent Cœurdoux, anticipated William Jones' discovery of the common source of Latin and Sanskrit.

Gaston-Laurent Cœurdoux: Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens

Cœurdoux had arrived in India in 1732, and by 1739 was superior of the Madurai, Carnatic and Mysore missions. Cœurdoux's interests were wide-ranging. In addition to his correspondence, a Telugu-French-Sanskrit dictionary, a report to the *Académie des Sciences* on his observation of a comet, and a short treatise on Indian seeds also survive.[95] Of the four letters from him in the *Lettres édifiantes,* two deal with Indian textiles and dyes, and another with paints.[96] In the fourth Cœurdoux discusses measures of distance used throughout India and Sri Lanka, giving the names of the primary measures in Gujarati, Hindi ('la langue Indoustane'), Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu and Sinhala, and their equivalents in French measures.[97] In this letter he also discusses the campaigns of the Marathas and the location of their capital city, which the cartographer Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville had been unable to place with any certainty, owing to the variation in different units of measure in use in India. He also describes divisions of time, which he believes to be in use 'from Cape Comorin, to the extremities of India, among all the nations with which it is peopled.'[98]

In a 1767 letter to the Abbé Barthélemy (1716–1795) of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Cœurdoux analysed the similarity between Sanskrit and Latin and argued that it could only be explained by supposing that they shared 'une origine commune'. Cœurdoux's letter was passed to Anquetil-Duperron, who does not seem to have realized the significance of the suggestion.[99] As a result (and partly also because of the French revolution) his letter was not published in the *Mémoires* of the Académie until 1808, by which time Jones had already published his now-famous 'Third Anniversary Discourse' to the Asiatic Society of

[95] Sommervogel 1890–1909, II: 1269.

[96] XXVI: 172–217, XXVII: 413–444, XXVIII, 284–334.

[97] XXXIV: 323–353.

[98] 'Cette division du tems ... est en usage, à ce que je crois, depuis le Cap de Comorin, jusq'aux extrémités de l'Inde chez toutes les nations dont elle est peuplée.' XXXIV: 326.

[99] See Godfrey 1967.

Bengal.[100] Anquetil-Duperron did however, respond to Cœurdoux and the two exchanged letters until 1772. Murr suggests that the abrupt end to this correspondence was prompted by the intervention of Nicholas-Jacques Desvaulx, who alerted Cœurdoux to the ways in which the information sent to Anquetil-Duperron was being used against the church by Voltaire and the authors of the *Encyclopédie*.[101] 'L'antivoltairianisme latent' of the *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens* further suggests to Murr that Cœurdoux and Desvaulx may have planned the work to counteract 'the abusive use which Voltaire and the enemies of religion made of the "Brahmes"', not least the information on them taken from the *Lettres édifiantes*.[102]

Cœurdoux's grasp of India as a single land inhabited by several different nations, using several different languages, demonstrated by his letter on measures of distance, provided a sound basis for his *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens* (completed c.1776–1777). Although the emphasis of this work is on south India, Cœurdoux's conception of Indian religion is not limited to southern Hinduism.[103] In a chapter entitled 'Conjectures on the true origin of the Brahmans, on the time of their establishment in India, and on the manner in which they were established',[104] Cœurdoux argues the Brahmans had entered India from the north around 1300 BCE, bringing with them 'a new religion',[105] and violently displacing the 'Boudistes', whose religion had been established earlier and had spread from Cape Comorin to Tibet, and throughout South-east Asia. On the basis of the similarity between Sanskrit and 'the learned language under the name of the *Pāli* language' used in 'Siam' and 'a very ancient list of the provinces of the empire of India', Cœurdoux concludes that prior to the invasion of the Brahmans, the Indies within and beyond the Ganges had been dominated by a Buddhist empire, 'the largest which there has been in the Indies'.[106] He reports that the 'religion of Boud still exists in its entirety in Tibet, in the kingdom of Siam and in many other countries, even in some parts of India, and especially on the island of Ceylon. It has been almost exterminated by the Brahmans in India on this side of the Ganges.'[107] He notes, however, that it appears that the present Brahmans are not the same as those of this early time, who were solitary philosophers and not a separate caste, but an order into which one could be admitted. While Cœurdoux dates Buddhism too early, his date for the incursion of the Brahmans from the north is remarkably close to that accepted by many modern scholars.

The plaudits which Cœurdoux's work (in the guise of Dubois's *Hindu Manners, Ceremonies and Customs*) continued to garner into the twentieth century, are testament to the success of the Jesuits' collective endeavours with respect to Indian religions. For beyond Cœurdoux's own achievement during his more than forty years in India, his work also depended upon his participation in the collection and exchange of information among the Jesuits in India over almost a century. Murr states that the *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens* 'may be considered an extension (a summa) of the *Lettres édifiantes*, in the form of a systematic treatise where the different theses of the Jesuits are integrated in an "authentic" description of the Brahmans of south India'.[108] She points to the importance in Cœurdoux's work of the 'oral tradition and the notes, treatises, memoirs and other manuscript documents by means of which the missionaries transmitted and exchanged their knowledge of the "terrain" in pursuit of effective missionary work ... It is just this tradition which constitutes, conjointly with the personal experience of [Cœurdoux], the true source of the information contained in the *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens*.'[109] It is to this tradition, above all, that we should attribute the confidence with which the Jesuits, unlike isolated individual authors such as Roger, speak of 'the system of religion recognized among the

[100] *Asiatick Researches* I (1789).

[101] Murr 1987, II: 53.

[102] 'l'usage abusif que Voltaire et les ennemis de la religion faisaient des "Brahmes"' Murr 1987, II: 86.

[103] Cf. Dubois, who writes: 'With regard to caste usages ... my researches were confined to the provinces south of the Kistna River ... [and] I cannot say whether these usages are the same to the north of that river and in Hindustan proper ... Fundamentally, however, caste constitutions are the same everywhere. Furthermore, however many the shades of difference between the different castes, however diversified the customs that control them, only slight differences exist between the various forms of religious belief. Indeed the religion of the Hindus may be said to form a common centre for the numerous elements which constitute Hinduism in its widest sense.' (Dubois 1906: 10–11).

[104] 'Conjectures sur la vraie origine des Brahmes, sur le tems de leur établissement aux Indes et sur la maniere dont ils s'y sont établis.' Murr 1987, I: 18–21.

[105] 'une nouvelle religion' Murr 1987, I: 20.

[106] 'la langue Savante Sous le nom de la langue *Bali* ... une très ancienne Liste des provinces de l'empire de l'Inde ... la plus vaste qu'il y ait eu aux Indes.' Murr 1987, I: 20.

[107] 'Cette religion de Boud subsiste encore en entier dans le Thibet, dans le royaume de Siam, et en beaucoup d'autres pays, même en quelques cantons de l'Inde, et Surtout dans l'isle de Ceylan. Elle a été presque exterminée par les BRAHMES dans les Indes de deçà le Gange.' Murr 1987, I: 20.

[108] 'On peut considérer que *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens* constitue un prolongement (une somme) des *L. É.*, sous la forme d'un traité systématique où les différentes thèses des Jésuites s'intègrent dans une description "authentique" des brahmanes de l'Inde du sud,' Murr 1983: 241.

[109] 'la tradition orale et les cours, traités, mémoires at autres documents manuscrits au moyen desquels les missionaires transmettaient ou échangeaient leurs connoissances du "terrain" en vue d'une pratique missionaire efficace ... C'est donc cette tradition que constitue, conjointement avec l'expérience personnelle de [Cœurdoux], la véritable source des informations contenues dans *Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens*.' Murr 1987, II: 70.

Indians'.[110] The importance of such a collaborative approach was realized by Anquetil-Duperron. His methodological reflections are worth considering as illuminating the basis of the advances in European understanding of India made by two very different societies, the Society of Jesus and the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Anquetil's travelling academy

Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), who has some claim to be considered the 'founder of modern Indology',[111] had embarked in 1755 'for the East Indies, with the resolution to bring back the Laws of Zoroaster and those of the Brahmans'.[112] He returned to France in 1762, and fulfilled the first part of his goal with the publication of his *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre* (1771). This work marks the beginning of the stream of translations which transformed the study of Indian religions. In it Anquetil commented that he had been prompted to produce it by his reflections on the inadequate methods used hitherto by those who had written on Indian religions:

> The majority of travellers content themselves with asking the Brahmans (and it is the same way in every country, with regard to the ministers of religion) about the essence of their dogmas, what they believe on such and such a subject. Some go so far as to procure extracts of their theological books. The answers, the extracts may be accurate; they may equally be analogues to the circumstances, to the minds, to the views of those who interrogate.[113]

The language in which such conversations were often carried on, was hardly appropriate to the subject matter. Anquetil notes that 'business is generally done with the natives of the country, and likewise with the other European nations, by means of the Portuguese jargon ... consisting of 150 or 200 words, almost without construction'.[114] Moreover, those

[110] Although Cœurdoux also drew on the work of authors such as Roger. See Murr's discussion of Cœurdoux's European sources (Murr 1987, II: 66ff).

[111] The claim is usually pressed by French scholars, see Schwab 1984: 158, and Filliozat 1984: 136. Following Kieffer (1983) and others, Anquetil-Duperron will henceforth be referred to simply as Anquetil.

[112] 'pour les Indes Orientales, dans le résolution d'en rapporter les Loix de Zoroastre & celles des Brahmes'. Anquetil 1771: 11.

[113] 'Le pluspart des Voyageurs se contentent de demander aux Brahmes (& c'est la même marche dans tous les pays, à l'egard des ministres de la Religion) le fond de leurs Dogmes, ce qu'ils croyent sur tel ou tel objet; quelques uns vont jusqu'à se procurer des Extraits de leurs livres Théologiques. Les résponses, les extraits peuvent être exacts; ils peuvent être analogues aux circonstances, à l'esprit, aux vues de celui qui interroge.' Anquetil 1771: 296.

[114] 'les affaires se sont généralement traitées avec les Naturels du pays, & même avec les autres nations Européennes, par le moyen du *Jargon Portugais*'. 'Le Portugais parlé

who were interrogated were not the most reliable sources: 'These interpreters, for the most part Christians, Parsis, or attenuated Brahmans, unlearned in Indian literature, with neither historical, political nor geographical knowledge, are obliged to respond on every subject; on the commerce of the country, which they have not studied; on the interests of princes, whom they have neither seen nor known'.[115] Quite apart from the Europeans imposing their own beliefs on what they were told, Anquetil warns that the Indians may also introduce such bias: 'if the Indian whom you consult is a Christian, in order to flatter you he will dress the gods of his country in a Christian manner'.[116]

In order to bring home to his readers the degree of distortion introduced into European accounts of Indian religions by these factors, Anquetil asks them to consider how imperfect a knowledge of the Christian religion a 'Tartar' would gain if, 'travelling in the less instructed Christian kingdoms, he should content himself with entering churches, and questioning the sexton or porter of a Portuguese convent. And yet this is the limit of the researches of the majority of travellers in India. They are happy if they take nothing but the simple testimony of a Dobachi, of a Pion, who ... explains to them, in bad Portuguese, the mysteries which he hardly knows, and which his priests would not be able to render without difficulty in the language of the country.'[117] As a result, writes Anquetil, 'the comparison which I have made between that which travellers say of the religion and practices of the Parsis, with that which is contained in their sacred books, has completely convinced me that in the study of opinions, of dogmas and of religious cults, the reading of original books was a necessary preliminary'.[118] He concludes that 'the only means of

n'est proprement qu'un jargon, consistant en 150 ou 200 mots, presque sans construction.' Anquetil 1786: xii–xiii.

[115] 'Et ces Interprêtes, la pluspart Chrétiens, Parses ou Brahmes mitigés, sans culture d'esprit, sans littérature Indienne, sans Connoissances historiques, politiques, ni géographiques, sont obligés de répondre sur tous les objets; sur le commerce du pays, qu'ils n'ont pas étudié; sur les interêts des Princes, qu'ils n'ont ni vus ni practiqués'. Anquetil 1786: xiii.

[116] 'si l'Indien que vous consultez est chrétien, pour vous flatter il habillera les Dieux de sa nation à la Chrétienne'. Anquetil 1771: xv. The truth of this remark may perhaps be judged with reference to Bouchet's conclusions about the origin of Indian religion.

[117] 'Un Tartare s'exposeroit à ne prendre qu'une connoissance imparfaite de la Religion Chrétienne, si, passant même dans les Royaumes Chrétiens les plus instruits, il se contentoit d'entrer dans les Eglises, de questionner le Sacristain ou le Portier d'un Couvent. C'est pourtant à quoi se bornent dans l'Inde les recherches de la plûpart des Voyageurs. Heureux même s'ils ne s'en tiennent pas au simple témoignage d'un Dobachi, d'un Pion, qui, pour ne pas rester court, leur explique, en mauvais Portugais, des Mysteres qu'il connoît à peine, & que ses Prêtres ne pourroient rendre que difficilement dans la Langue du Pays.' Anquetil 1771: 87–88.

[118] 'La comparaison que j'ai faite de ce que les Voyageurs disent de la Religion & des usages de Parses, avec ce que contiennent leurs Livres sacrés, m'a plainement convaincu

knowing the truth, is to learn the languages well, to translate for oneself the fundamental works, and then to confer, books in hand, with the learned of the country on the matters with which they deal.'[119]

Anquetil here describes the method by which his *Zend-Avesta* was produced. In regard to the other religions of India, however, Anquetil never realized his ideal; he never mastered Sanskrit, nor did he return to India with the translations he made from Persian to consult with the pandits. In 1787 he published four Upanishads translated into French from Dārā Shikūh's *Sirr-i Akbar*, a seventeenth-century Persian collection of fifty Upaniṣadic texts, the first time such texts had appeared in a European language. However, by the time his Latin translation of the whole of the *Sirr-i Akbar* was published (1801–1802), such indirect translations had been rendered obsolete. In 1799 a direct translation from Sanskrit of the *Īśā Upaniṣad* had been published in an edition of the collected works of William Jones. Nevertheless Anquetil's ideal is a reasonable description of the procedure of scholars such as Colebrooke who came after him and, to a lesser extent, of the more scholarly among the Jesuits who preceded him. More prophetic, however, was his realization of the 'utility of literary societies'[120] for the study of Indian religions.

Anquetil relates that while reflecting in Surat on the pains it had taken him to acquire and to translate the *Zend-Avesta*, he realized that progress in the human sciences required a corporate approach. To this end he proposed the establishment of 'itinerant academies'.[121] Anquetil argues that while 'it is true that several missionaries have already given important works on Asia,' and these have been supplemented by works of other learned writers in Europe, nevertheless for the former 'the occupations attached to the state of a missionary', and for the latter 'the suspension of [French] Eastern trade', and with it the possibility of 'taking a look for oneself among them, of seeing things with one's own eyes' prevent either from acquiring 'an entirely satisfactory notion of these countries. And this gap will never be filled by the accounts of travellers simply military, marine or merchant. There must be professional as well as travelling scholars.'[122]

que dans l'étude des opinions, des dogmes & les cultes Religieux, la lecture des Livres Originaux étoit un préalable nécessaire'. Anquetil 1771: 86–87.

[119] 'Le seul moyen de connoitre la vérité, est de bien apprendre les langues, de traduire soi-même les Ouvrages fondamentaux & de conferer ensuite avec les Savans du pays sur les matieres qui y sont traitées, les livres en main.' Anquetil 1786: 296.

[120] Anquetil 1771: xi.

[121] 'Académies ambulantes'. Anquetil 1771: xi.

[122] 'Il est vray que plusieurs Missionaires ont déja donné sur l'Asie des Ouvrages importans, essentiels même en leur genre ont aussi étendu dans le même plan, la sphere de nos connoissances: mais, d'un côté, les occupations attachées à l'état de Missionaire, de l'autre, la privation du commerce des Orientaux, de l'avantage de prendre chez eux ce tour qui leur est propre, de voir les choses de ses yeux; ces inconvéniens (du moins c'est mon opinion) empêcheront toujours, si l'on ne tente pas une autre voie, d'avoir sur ces contrées des notion entierement satisfaisantes: & jamais ce vide ne sera rempli par les relations des Voyageurs simplements Militaires, Marins ou Marchand. Ce sont des Sçavans de profession qu'il faut & des Sçavans voyageurs.' Anquetil 1771: x–xi.

Anquetil envisaged a body of eighty scholars, dispersed in pairs around the world: 'two at Constantinople, two at Bagdad, two at Ispahan, two at Delhi, two at Astrakan, four in the Grand Tartary, two in Thibet, two in Chinese Tartary, and two in Kamchatka; returning again to the South-West, two would be fixed at Peking, two at Canton, two at Malak or at Siam, two at Patna, two in Bengal in the Ganges basin, two at Pondicherry, two at Ceylon, two at Mahé, two at Pune, two at Surat, two at Bassora.' Eight more were assigned to the Americas, ten to Africa and eight would remain in France 'to prepare the things necessary for the Academicians' elsewhere. Finally, a further eight (two each for the Americas and Africa, four for Asia) would visit those in their places of study to collect their works and to bring supplies. These, together with other scholars, would then constitute in Paris, 'a particular body charged with receiving, placing in good order, and publishing the curious productions sent from the three largest parts of the world.'[123] The model for the members of this academy would be Anquetil himself.[124] Anquetil expected each to know 'Hebrew, several modern European languages, ancient history, a little theology, metaphysics and astronomy.' Having learnt the regional vernacular the scholar's first priority would be to 'apply himself to the sacred language, and read the books of the law and the theological works', which 'works are the key to all the others'. The scholars ought then to produce grammars and dictionaries, and then a bibliography indicating the relative age and importance of local texts. Only then, once these preliminaries are in place, shall they work 'on the general history of the country.'

Anquetil believed that 'the glory of having contributed to the progress of human knowledge, and the pleasure of having passed on an idea of the places, the peoples, the different objects which they will have been occupied with in the course of their voyages, will be just recompense for their labours', in fact, it must also be the only recompense, for fear that people without of the necessary qualities, and driven by mere commercial

[123] Anquetil's plan is outlined in his preface to the *Zend-Avesta* (Anquetil 1771: xi–xii).

[124] 'J'ai en quelque sorte ébauché dans mes recherches l'exécution du plan dont je viens de donner l'esquisse.' Anquetil 1771: xv. Anquetil's academy is reminiscent of Salomon's House in Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627): 'For the several employments and offices of our fellows, we have twelve that sail into foreign countries under the names of other nations (for our own we conceal), who bring us the books and abstracts, and patterns of experiments of all other parts. These we call merchants of light' (Bacon 1906: 273).

interest, might take over.[125] Anquetil also allows a place for national pride, presenting his plan for itinerant scholars as 'a moment which France could have.'[126] In truth, France's moment had already been, in the work of the Jesuits which emerged as a by-product of their primary purpose in India.

Anquetil concludes his proposal for an academy of travelling scholars by exclaiming: 'Vain hope, chimerical project! my Academy will never exist: and men, accustomed to their errors or scared of the work which would be demanded by similar researches, will feed on systems, on fantastic portraits, and will continue to study everything, to know everything, except man.'[127] Anquetil's academy may never have been realized, but the informal network of researchers who later formed the core membership of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (founded thirteen years after Anquetil wrote) was to accomplish much of what Anquetil expected of his academy, as least in respect of Asia. In an appendix added to his *Recherches Historiques et Géographiques sur l'Inde* (1786) after the first part had been printed, Anquetil welcomed the first results of their efforts. Discussing Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785), he identified himself with 'the political morality which M. Hastings professes in this excellent letter [prefixed to Wilkins' work]' adding that 'it is for me a very sensible pleasure to see the leading man of the English nation in India, revise the principles which I tried to establish, in 1778, in the *Législation Orientale*.'[128]

While there are many factors which set the Jesuits apart from their predecessors, it is above all to the corporate nature of their approach to Indian religions that we should attribute their conception of a unitary Indian religion. In Le Gac's 'Gentilisme' we see the first direct anticipation of 'Hinduism'. This concept is, however, not monolithic, and it

[125] 'La gloire d'avoir contribué au progrès des conoissances humaines & le plaisir de repasser en idée les lieux, les peuples, les différens objets qui les auroient occupés dans le cours de leurs voyages, seroient la juste récompense de leurs travaux; ce doit même être la seule, de peur qu'avec le tems des vûes d'intérêt, comme dans les Compagnies de Commerce, ne portassent des personnes dépourvues des qualités nécessaires, à briguer cette espece de Direction.' Anquetil 1771: xii–xiii.

[126] 'un moment de celle que la France pourroit avoir' Anquetil 1771: xi.

[127] 'Vaine espérance, projet chimérique! mon Académie n'existera jamais: & les hommes, accoutumés à leurs erreurs ou effrayés du travail que demanderoient de pareilles recherches, se nourriront de systêmes, de portraits de fantaisie, & continueront de tout étudier, de tout connoître, excepté l'homme.' Anquetil 1771: xvi.

[128] 'la morale politique que professe M. Hastings dans cette excellent lettre: c'est pour moi un plaisir bien sensible de voir le premier homme de la Nation Angloise dans l'Inde, revenir aux Principes que j'ai tâché d'établir, en 1778, dans la *Législation Orientale*.' (Anquetil 1786: 560). Later still, in *L'Inde en rapport avec l'Europe* he was to berate 'L'audacieuse ALBION ... cruelle et perfide' for its 'Machiavélism' in India (Anquetil 1798: subtitle).

emerges neither from geographical misconceptions nor theological preconceptions, but from a sustained corporate engagement with India and with Hindus. The concept emerges when it does as part of a growing European conceptual grasp of India, expressed for example in the first European maps of the Indian sub-continent, which appeared in the same decade as the last of Bouchet's contributions to the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*. The historical and theoretical parallels in the development of these different conceptual tools (the concept of Hinduism and maps of India) will be traced further in the final chapter.

8

Mapping Hinduism

The process of constructing a general category to represent the religious beliefs and practices of the peoples that European writers encountered in India was underway from at least the start of the seventeenth century and the assigning of the name 'Hinduism' to this category in the 1780s represents neither the start nor the culmination but only one stage of this process, which continued into the nineteenth century. The different stages of this process have been ignored in much recent scholarship which has tended to assimilate the views of Hinduism in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century European works to later or, occasionally, to earlier views. In particular it is often suggested that the conventional fourfold classification of the world's religions meant that Indian religious beliefs and practices were from the outset perceived as a unitary entity, part of a world-wide heathenism, and that this only changed with the invention of the category of Hinduism in the early nineteenth century. Richard King's summary account of the process is, as will be shown, representative of recent scholarship. He writes: "'Hindu' in fact only came into provenance amongst Westerners in the eighteenth century. Previously, the predominant Christian perspective amongst Europeans classified Indian religion under the all-inclusive rubric of Heathenism. On this view there were four major religious groups, Jews, Christians, Mahometans (i. e. Muslims) and Heathens.'[1] King begins his brief account of 'the modern myth of Hinduism'[2] in the late eighteenth century with Halhed:

> The term 'Hinduism' seems first to have made an appearance in the early nineteenth century, and gradually gained provenance in the decades thereafter. Eighteenth-century references to the 'religion of the Gentoos' (e. g. Nathaniel Brassey Halhead [*sic*] (1776), *A Code of Gentoo Laws*) were gradually supplanted in the nineteenth century by references to 'the religion of the Hindoos' – a preference for the Persian as opposed to the Portuguese designation of the Indian people. However, it is not until the nineteenth century proper that the term "Hinduism" became used as a signifier of a unified, all-embracing and independent religious entity in both Western and Indian circles.[3]

King explains that the term 'Hinduism', 'is a Western explanatory construct. As such it reflects the colonial and Judaeo-Christian presuppo-

[1] King 1999: 99. Cf. Balagangadhara 1994: 111. Other similar accounts will be considered below.

[2] King 1999: Chapter 5 'The modern myth of Hinduism'.

[3] King 1999: 100.

sitions of the Western Orientalists who first coined the term ... the superimposition of the monolithic entity of 'Hinduism' upon Indian religious material has distorted and perhaps irretrievably transformed Indian religiosity in a Westernized direction.'[4] This has happened through 'an implicit (and sometimes explicit) tendency to define Indian religion in terms of a normative paradigm of religion based upon contemporary Western understandings of the Judaeo-Christian traditions' and through what King calls 'the textualization of Indian religion' in which 'the oral and "popular" aspect of Indian religious tradition was either ignored or decried as evidence of the degradation of contemporary Hindu religion into superstitious practices that bore little or no relation to "their own" texts'.[5]

That 'Hinduism' is indeed a Western explanatory construct, the history of the term, examined here, clearly demonstrates. The same history also shows, however, that at least some of the first European authors to use the term recognized this fact.[6] King's further charges, that the concept 'Hinduism' reflected colonial and Judaeo-Christian presuppositions, that it resulted in the superimposition of a monolithic entity and that it distorted Indian religiosity, will be examined after a brief review of some other accounts of the emergence of the concept.

Ronald Inden locates the invention of Hinduism in nineteenth century European works, and his account makes no reference to earlier sources.[7] The English Utilitarians are identified as 'the founders of Indological discourse' and there is no suggestion that earlier writers may have formed an alternative view of Hinduism: 'The predominant construct of Hinduism was the one fashioned by Utilitarians and Christian idealists.'[8] Like King, Inden implicates writers on Hinduism in imperialism:

> British, French and German scholars asserted again and again as they helped draw India into the Anglo-French imperial formation of the nineteenth century that because of its radically otherworldly or spiritual orientation, the key to understanding the thinking of that civilization lay in understanding its religious basis ... they have designated the religion they have invented by the term (from the Persian, as one is always told) Hinduism.[9]

[4] King 1999: 100.

[5] King 1999: 101.

[6] We have already cited (above, p.50) H. H. Wilson's careful use of 'the Hindu religion' noting that it 'is a term, that has been hitherto employed in a collective sense, to designate a faith and worship of an almost endlessly diversified description' (Wilson 1846: 1).

[7] Inden 1990, Chapter 3, 'Hinduism: the Mind of India'.

[8] Inden 1990: 89.

[9] Inden 1990: 86.

Marshall takes a longer and a more cautious view speaking of the 'discovery', rather than the invention, of Hinduism in the eighteenth, rather than the nineteenth, century.[10] However, although he notes that 'English writers in the second half of the eighteenth century were the heirs to over two hundred years of attempts by Europeans to interpret Hinduism',[11] he tends to project later eighteenth-century views of Hinduism onto the earlier accounts. So, for example, he states of the authors[12] of the texts he excerpts: 'As Europeans have always tended to do, they created Hinduism in their own image.'[13] He does not attend to the earlier works, noting that 'published accounts of India [which] appeared in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ... do not seem to have received very much public notice.'[14] We have noted above the wide dissemination of at least some of these works; what is true is that in the considerable body of literature which has appeared in the wake of Said's *Orientalism* these early works have received much less attention than have later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works.

Most other accounts of the foundation of Indological scholarship continue to date it to the late eighteenth century, making only passing references to what went before.[15] One of the few exceptions has been Heinrich von Stietencron.[16] However, if Inden and Marshall tend to assimilate seventeenth and early-eighteenth century European accounts of Hinduism to later works, Stietencron comprehensively assimilates their concept of Hinduism to that of earlier centuries.

Stietencron is in broad agreement with King, except that he locates the concept of a unitary Indian religion earlier. He writes that 'the concept of a common Indian religion – whatever its name – did not originate in India. It was introduced from the West, and its history goes back to a period when Western knowledge about distant India was very vague ... although the term 'Hinduism' came into common use as late as the nineteenth century, the underlying concept of a unity of Indian religion was already in existence in the West before that religion was actually encountered by European missionaries and traders ... The concept ... was present in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and it was totally independent of any concrete knowledge about India.'[17] The concept to which Stietencron refers is 'heathenism' in the fourfold classification: 'European missionaries and traders who settled down on the shores of India from 1598 [*sic*] onwards ... knew for certain that the entire population of the world was divided into four major religious systems or laws, namely, *lex christiana, lex iudaica, lex mahometana* and *lex gentilium*, i. e., the religious norms and doctrines of the Christians, the Jews, the Moslem and the heathen.'[18]

Stietencron goes so far as to concede that 'Some of the early missionaries, like Roberto de Nobili, were interested in the language and culture of the Indian heathen.'[19] However, he states confidently that

> It never occurred to them that they might have to do with different faiths because their conceptual framework regarding the religions of this world had no room for any new creed other than the superstitious creed of the followers of Satan; and the apparent contradictions within this world-wide system of the heathen only confirmed their belief that Satan had created the baffling variety of superstitious cults precisely in order to confuse and enslave these poor, ill-guided people in the snares of delusion.[20]

The conceptual framework is the fourfold classification. Elsewhere Stietencron has written that 'striking differences within this heathen religion had to be treated as sectarian differences. There was no other possibility. For that they could be treated as different "religions" was precluded in advance by the general conception of the four religions of

[10] Marshall 1970.

[11] Marshall 1970: 20.

[12] John Zephaniah Holwell, Alexander Dow, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, William Hastings, Charles Wilkins and William Jones.

[13] Marshall 1970: 43.

[14] Marshall 1970: 2.

[15] So, for example, Rohit Barot states 'the founding of the Asiatic Society in January 1784 ... marked the birth of indological researches which contributed to a distinctive consciousness of India and Hinduism in the West.' (Barot 1994: 69). Likewise Halbfass notes 'the beginning of modern Indological research ... is usually associated with the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 and the work of the British pioneers W. Jones, Ch. Wilkins and H. Th. Colebrooke.' Halbfass does give an extended account of the achievements of earlier writers, especially the Jesuits, noting however, that 'for a variety of reasons these remarkable efforts did not inaugurate the tradition of modern Indological research as such.' (Halbfass 1988: 45) In addition to Marshall (1970), Inden (1990) and King (1999), cited above, see also Dalmia and Stietencron 1995. Of the twenty-one essays in this collection only three discuss representations of Hinduism prior to the nineteenth century and only two of those (Stietencron and Dharampal-Frick) are concerned with European representations. Dharampal-Frick's essay is concerned with caste, rather than Hinduism (Dharampal-Frick 1995). As will be shown, Stietencron's account of early European representations of Hinduism is seriously flawed.

[16] In addition to Dharampal-Frick and Balagangadhara, both discussed above, others include Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat and David Lorenzen. Filliozat, who states that '[t]he birth of Indology as a real science is the result of a collaboration between Indian traditional scholars and French missionaries ... in the first decades of the eighteenth century' (Filliozat 1984: 133), discusses Pons and mentions Cœurdoux, but his article is mainly concerned with later French Indology. Lorenzen discusses, amongst others, the eighteenth-century Italian Franciscans Guiseppe Felice da Morro and Marco della Tomba and argues that 'Hinduism is not a colonial construct or invention, nor even a European one' (Lorenzen 1999: 640).

[17] Stietencron 1995: 72.

[18] Stietencron 1995: 73–4.

[19] Stietencron 1995: 74.

[20] Stietencron 1995: 75.

mankind.'[21] Stietencron mentions the 'two important Latin treatises of Roberto de Nobili' edited by Rajamanickam, but in the light of the sections of these treatises quoted above it appears that Stietencron has drawn his conclusion concerning Nobili without reading them. Likewise he mentions the title of Lord's work, but appears to know only the brief mention of it in Marshall.[22] His account continues: 'As late as the first quarter of the eighteenth century when Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg wrote his famous book on the Malabarian heathendom this was still the world-view of European missionaries.' From here, Stietencron moves directly to 'the end of the eighteenth century [which] saw a change in this state of affairs':

> Now, finally, the Indian heathen were considered to have a distinct religion of their own. That religion had to be given a name. The name originally used to denote it was 'Brahmanism', and from the 1820s onwards it was 'Hinduism' (originally spelt Hindooism). For a while, scholars used the two terms side by side in order to distinguish Vedic 'Brahmanism' from later 'Hinduism'. In the long run the term Hinduism triumphed. Historical developments were specified by qualifications like 'Older', 'Younger', and 'Neo'-Hinduism. That this Hinduism was a culture or civilization rather than a religion, and that it contained several distinct religions within itself could not yet be perceived at the time.[23]

In his review of the 'fundamental premisses of India-orientated Religionswissenschaft' Stietencron notes that the 'most important premiss was the idea that it was *a single* Hindu religion with which one had to do. This, which was taken over from the early missionaries' view of the religion of Indian heathens, was never sufficiently questioned.'[24] This had dire consequences:

> As the Indian independence movement and the struggle for a national Indian unity was supported by neither a linguistic, nor a racial, nor, before the start of foreign rule, a political unity, the *religious* unity invented by Western scholars represented the only element of the independence-struggle, which could legitimate the desired national unity. That this legitimation led to conflict with the Muslims, and eventually to the partition of India and Pakistan, is a tragic result of the taking over of the western misinterpretations by the Indians themselves.[25]

[21] 'mußte man auffallende Unterschiede innerhalb dieser heidnischen Religion als "sektarische" Unterschiede betrachten. Eine andere Möglichkeit gab es nicht. Denn daß es sich um verschiedene "Religionen" handeln könne, war von vorherein durch das Gesamtkonzept der vier Religionen der Menschheit ausgeschlossen.' Stietencron 1988: 127–128.

[22] Stietencron 1995: 74.

[23] Stietencron 1995: 75.

[24] 'grundsätzlichen Prämissen indien-orientierter Religionswissenschaft ... Wichtigste Prämisse war die Vorstellung, man habe es mit *einer* Hindu-Religion zu tun. Diese, von den frühen Missionaren übernommene Sicht von der Religion der indischen Heiden wurde nie ausreichend hinterfragt.' Stietencron 1988: 149.

Thus, although Stietencron, unlike Inden or King, discusses earlier writers, in essence his account moves directly from a view of Indian religion as a single entity within the fourfold classification (which must precede Nobili's account of Indian religious plurality), to the nineteenth century when, he argues, 'the new concept "Hinduism" in the sense of "the religion of the Hindus" was formed', and hence to the 'tragic result of the taking over of the western misinterpretations' by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century independence movement.[26] The result of the elision in Stietencron's account of the recognition of the plurality of Indian religious adherence and the process which resulted in the formation of the concept 'Hinduism' is that he is unable to recognize the degree to which the study of Indian religions has shaped the concept 'religion' itself. Hence, like other writers discussed above, Stietencron remains in thrall to the Christian theological preconceptions about religion which he criticizes in early European writers on Hinduism.[27]

We have seen above that Nobili explicitly denies, as part of his argument for his missionary method of adaptation, that the Hindus may be said to form a single religion.[28] He denies that there is a single unified religious entity which could be signified by the common use of the symbol of the thread and tuft. The two other outstanding European writers on Hinduism of the seventeenth century, Lord and Roger, both offer detailed accounts of specific local or regional religious groups. Lord exploits the semantic ambiguity of the term 'Banian' to claim a wider application for his work, but even in its broader sense, 'Banian' was from its first use in English taken to be a regional term, and not equivalent to 'Indian'.[29] Roger's account emphasizes the ritual practices or 'divine service' (Godsdienst) of the Brahmans, and he does not attempt to give an explicit account of a 'religion of the Brahmans' not least because he

[25] 'Da sich die indische Unabhängigkeitsbewegung und der Kampf um nationale Einheit Indiens weder auf eine sprachliche noch auf eine rassische Einheit und auch nicht auf eine politische Einheit vor Beginn der Fremdherrschaft stützen konnte, bildete die von westlichen Wissenschaftlern erfundene *religiöse* Einheit das einzige Element des Freiheitskampfes, welches die erstrebte nationale Einheit legitimieren konnte. Daß diese Legitimation zum Konflikt mit den Muslimen und schließlich zur Teilung von Indien und Pakistan führte, ist ein tragisches Ergebnis der Übernahme westlicher Fehlinterpretationen durch die Inder selbst.' Stietencron 1988: 150.

[26] 'im 19. Jahrhundert der neue Begriff "Hinduismus" im Sinne von "Religion der Hindus" geprägt wurde'. Stietencron 1988: 131.

[27] See above, p.35.

[28] See above, p.62.

[29] Hakluyt, cited above, p.64. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), *s. v.* 'Banian'. The concept of 'India' itself had yet to gain its modern sense. See below, p.162.

makes little use of a reified concept of a religion at all. Nevertheless Roger's selection of religious beliefs and practices in the second part of his work was influential in subsequent works which did take such a religion as their object: 'Roger invented the classic plan for a treatise on the Indians, and it is this classic plan which is to be found in the vectors of [Cœurdoux's] *Mœurs et Coutumes*'.[30] Neither Lord nor Roger offers a monolithic account of Hinduism as a single pan-Indian religion, or of a worldwide 'heathenism' within the fourfold classification. Lord, like Nobili, recognizes a plurality of religious adherence among the Indians, and Roger discusses the different ritual practices of several Hindu groups without subsuming them under a single religious entity.

The object of Ziegenbalg's first major work on Indian religion is the 'Malabarian Heathenism' which 'is spread far and wide in India'.[31] Ziegenbalg's sense of the connection between the 'heathenism' practised in Bengal, in the Mogul realm, on the Malabar coast and in Ceylon, is clearly a step in the direction of a conception of 'Hinduism' as what King calls 'a unified, all-embracing and independent religious entity'. We have shown, however, that far from being monolithic, his account treats Hinduism as a plural phenomenon, susceptible to analysis as a religion on various levels. It shows, as Dharampal-Frick suggests 'astonishing affinity to "new" positions in the conception of Hinduism.'[32] Despite Ziegenbalg's sense of the relatedness of the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of different parts of India, his primary concern remains with 'Malabarian', that is, South Indian, Hinduism. It is not until the Jesuit missionaries in different parts of India begin exchanging detailed information about Indian religious beliefs and practices in the first decades of the eighteenth century that a clear concept of a unified Hinduism begins to be used routinely and with confidence. Nevertheless, the Jesuit accounts are not without concern for plurality and diversity and, like those of the other writers examine here, do not present Hinduism as a monolithic entity.

Nor may these accounts be explained as adjuncts of imperialism. The East India Companies served by Lord and Roger had yet to entertain imperial ambitions.[33] Although Ziegenbalg was commissioned by the Danish king, he was viewed with suspicion by the Danish authorities in Tranquebar and imprisoned by them for intervening in the case of an Indian widow he thought to have been defrauded by a Danish trader.[34] The Jesuits did have close links with the French authorities in Pondicherry. Nevertheless, as Rosane Rocher notes, for the eighteenth century in general, 'the prevailing ethos was not yet imperialist.'[35]

Above all it must be stressed that the concept of a unified Hindu religion in these works was not derived from theological preconceptions of a fourth world-religion. Nobili states that 'these people follow one common way of life, but many *religions*';[36] Lord not only distinguishes 'the Banian religion' from 'the religion of the Parsees', but recognizes differences of religious affiliation among both groups. Ziegenbalg writes that the Malabarians 'have forged many different religions, among which there are in particular two main religions, the first called Śivamatam, the second Viṣṇumatam.[37] While not historically accurate, Cœurdoux's account of the violent displacement of the 'Boudistes' by the 'new religion' of the Brahmans around 1300 BCE shows a recognition of religious plurality which could not be accommodated in the fourfold classification. It was precisely the recognition of a plurality of Indian religious beliefs and practices susceptible to analysis as 'religions', which forced the abandonment of the fourfold classification, *before* the emergence of the concept of Hinduism as a unitary religious entity in the works of the French Jesuits in the first decades of the eighteenth century. That other European authors continue to use the fourfold classification into the nineteenth century only underlines the need for synchronic as well as diachronic nuance in our understanding of these authors.[38]

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[30] 'Roger avait inventé le plan-type du traité sur les Indiens et c'est ce plan-type dont on retrouve les lignes de force dans *Mœurs et Coutumes*'. Murr 1987, II: 73.

[31] 'Das malabarische Heidenthum erstrecket sich in Indien sehr weit und breit'. Ziegenbalg 1926: 23.

[32] Dharampal-Frick 1994: 359.

[33] For the English East India Company see Roe's comments, cited above p.87. For both the English and the Dutch companies, see Holden Furber's comments that at this period 'the men who directed and served them hardly knew what imperialism was ... Even toward the end of the eighteenth century when the rule of the English and Dutch companies over large populations was becoming clearly apparent, contemporaries were not thinking in terms of Kipling's "White Man's Burden"' ('The History of East India Companies: General Problems' in Michel Mollat, ed., *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*, Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1970: 415–18 cited in Rocher 1993: 216).

[34] For details of this episode see Sandgren 1991.

[35] Rocher 1993: 216.

[36] 'hi populi unum habeant civilem cultum, religionem vero multiplicem' Nobili 1971: 112/113, emphasis added. See above, p.62 for discussion of a possible alternative sense of this phrase.

[37] '... haben mancherley Religionen geschmiedet, unter welchen sonderlich 2. Haupt-Religionen sind, die eine Tschiwamadam, und die andere Wischtmadam gennant.' Ziegenbalg 1713: 28r–28v.

[38] The need to take account of the different degrees of sophistication in European texts on India has been noted by Bayly, who points out that 'Formal orientalist texts, particularly those of a popular nature, quite often failed to transmit the relatively complex understanding of men actually involved in the governance of India, and cultural historians should beware of reading too much into them.' Bayly 1996: 326.

'Hinduism', 'Religion' and 'India'

It may appear trite to state that the concept of Hinduism as a pan-Indian religion depends upon the concepts 'India' and 'religion', but it should not be taken for granted that the earliest authors on Indian religions had either concept in their modern sense. Roger's work provides evidence to suggest that the shift to the modern sense of 'religion', discussed above in chapter one, was still underway at the time of the emergence of the concept of 'Hinduism'. Regarding the European conception of India as a geographical entity, Edney notes that prior to the eighteenth century, European maps framed India in three distinct ways:

> Beginning in the early 1500s, general maps showed the traditional region of the Indies, from the Indus to Indochina. The subcontinent was, of course, a prominent feature of those maps, but it was not their focus. Later, in the sixteenth century, Europeans began to produce maps that framed only the peninsula south of the river Krishna, the area of their principal involvement. The third framing developed early in the seventeenth century and focused on the polity of the Mughal empire. These maps emphasized the seat of Mughal power in the northern plains. They also included the Mughal territories west of the Indus: the Punjab, the Hindu Kush, and on occasion Afghanistan. They omitted the peninsula.[39]

Maps which merged the two regional framings to produce a map of 'the entire region usually considered to be India *per se*' began to appear in the first decades of the eighteenth century.[40] Edney argues, however, that it was only 'during the 1760s and the 1770s that the two regional framings completely merged to create a conception of India as a region'.[41] 'The new conception of the subcontinent as an actual region in and of itself was most apparent in, and most effectively disseminated by, James Rennell's maps of India and their accompanying geographical memoirs ... It is in his highly influential maps that we find the establishment of India as a meaningful, if still ambiguous, geographical entity.'[42] The parallel with the development of the concept 'Hinduism' is striking.[43] The Jesuit letters from the second and third decades of the eighteenth century begin to refer to 'the system of religion recognized among the Indians', the 'religion of the Indians' and 'Gentilism', while at the same time the first maps of India as a coherent geographical entity are beginning to appear.

[39] Edney 1997: 4–5.

[40] Edney reproduces 'one of the first maps to show all of South Asia in its modern conception', which was published in 1717. (Edney 1997: 7–8).

[41] Edney 1997: 9.

[42] Edney 1997: 9. Rennell's first general map *Hindoostan* was first published in 1782, his *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* appeared first in 1783, and in subsequent editions in 1785, 1788, 1792 and 1793. See Edney 1997: 99.

[43] It is not necessary to claim a causal connection between these developments for their coincidence to be significant.

The concept of a unified pan-Indian religion is firmly established by the 1770s, when 'Holwell's Gentooism' appeared, and 'Hindooism' itself appears in 1787. It was reading Rennell's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* which prompted William Robertson to write his *Historical Disquisition concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India* (London, 1791) in which he gave, in a thirty-page appendix[44] a summary account of Europe's knowledge of Hinduism. Robertson, who never visited India, sought to make up for his lack of personal knowledge through extensive reading: 'fully aware of the disadvantage under which I laboured in undertaking to describe countries of which I had not any local knowledge ... I consulted, with persevering industry, the works of all the authors I could procure, who have given any account of India.'[45] The works cited throughout the *Disquisition* indicate that Robertson knew virtually all the significant works on India published in English and French from Roger to the most recent editions of *Asiatick Researches* and the translations from Sanskrit of Jones and Wilkins.[46] Robertson's appendix therefore represents what it was possible to know of Indian religions at the start of the last decade of the eighteenth century from reading European works on India alone.[47] Although Robertson, reflecting his sources, mentions the difficulties of enumerating 'the multitude of deities which are the objects of adoration in India' he nonetheless understands 'the religious tenets and practices' of the Indians to form 'a regular and complete system of superstition', which he describes as 'the national religion' of India:[48] 'the institutions of [this] religion', are 'publicly established in all the extensive countries stretching from the Banks of the Indus to Cape Comorin'.[49] The concept of 'Hinduism' and the concept of 'India' in its modern sense, are coeval.

[44] Geoffrey Carnall suggests that 'Judging from the manuscript of the *Disquisition*, the appendix may have been written first, with the narrative as an afterthought'. Carnall 1997: 211.

[45] Robertson 1791: iv.

[46] As Principal of Edinburgh University Robertson would have been in a better position than most regarding access to learned works.

[47] Robertson's only other source of information on India resulted from his having 'the good fortune to reckon among my friends some Gentlemen who have filled important stations, civil and military, in India, and who have visited many parts of it.' These may have included Robertson's two younger sons, both of whom were officers in the armies of the East India Company. Of these friends he states: 'I had recourse frequently to them, and from their conversation learned many things which I could not have found in books.' (Robertson 1791: iv–v). Given the small number of Europeans in India who had any detailed understanding of Hinduism it is unlikely that Robertson learnt much of significance concerning Hinduism from those with whom he spoke beyond what he already knew from the works of European writers on Hinduism.

[48] Robertson 1791: 301, 321. Cf. "this vast and complicated system of superstition" (302), and "the received mythology, or system of superstitious belief" (303).

[49] Robertson 1791: 302.

Representation and distortion

Having shown that the construct of Hinduism in the works of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writers was not monolithic and ought not to be understood simply as the projection of Christian or imperialist preconceptions, we are now able to consider a charge which is made by several authors and which is expressed by King as the claim that the superimposition of the concept '"Hinduism" upon Indian religious material has distorted and perhaps irretrievably transformed Indian religiosity in a Westernized direction.'[50] It is arguable that much of what has been shown here for seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writers on Hinduism is also true of many later eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European writers, in particular, that their view of Hinduism is not monolithic. The limits of this work do not allow such an assessment to be made. However, the theoretical foundation established in the first two chapters above is relevant to the question of distortion not only in nineteenth century works but also in contemporary representations of Hinduism.

The claim that the concept 'Hinduism' has distorted Western perceptions of Indian religious material can and should be separated from the claim that Indian religiosity has been irretrievably transformed in a Westernized direction. The claim that the changes undergone by Hinduism in the last two centuries were influenced *in part* by its encounter with those who have studied it has been made by many scholars and will not be disputed here.[51] Romila Thapar has argued that the attempt, beginning in the nineteenth century and accelerated for political ends in the twentieth century, 'to defend, redefine and create Hinduism on the model of Christianity', has resulted in a 'uniform, monolithic, Hinduism' which she calls 'Syndicated Hinduism'.[52] She writes that 'Syndicated Hinduism claims to be re-establishing the Hinduism of pre-modern times: in fact it is only establishing itself and in the process *distorting* the historical and cultural dimensions of the indigenous religions and divesting them of nuances and variety which were major sources of their enrichment.'[53] Whether the changes in Hinduism over the last two centuries are best described as a distortion or a transformation of what went

[50] King 1999: 100.
[51] Although the claim should not be exaggerated. A host of other factors were at work, and the attention paid to 'reformed' Hinduism should not lead us to ignore the fact that the movement was largely restricted to high-caste, urban Hindus. See also Richard Young's study of 'Resistant Hinduism' (Young 1981).
[52] Thapar 1997: 65, 75.
[53] Thapar 1997: 79, emphasis added.

before[54] is a different issue from the claim that the concept of Hinduism in the works of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth century writers produced a distorted view of Indian religious material, or the claim that the late twentieth-century political ideologues have promoted a distorted concept of Hinduism.

Thapar writes that '[t]he term Hinduism as we understand it today to describe a particular religion is modern, as also is the concept which it presupposes, both resulting from a series of choices made from range of belief, ritual and practice which were collated into the creation of this religion.'[55] The review of the critiques of 'religion' and of 'Hinduism' was undertaken in order to show that the fact that they are modern, Western concepts is in itself no objection to their use. As Ninian Smart writes 'The non-traditional nature of western terms does not *by itself* mean that there is a distorting reification. "Gamesmanship" is of fairly recent coinage, but gamesmanship preceded the coinage (hence the success of the coinage).'[56] It remains to been shown that the fact that the use of the term 'Hinduism' inevitably imposes a partial view of its intended object, a selection of a potentially limitless range of human beliefs and practices, is not a reason to dismiss the concept as a 'distortion'.

It is arguable that to describe Hinduism as a religion at all is itself a distortion. We have seen that Lach and van Kley state that the division, in Roger's work, 'of life into secular and religious spheres, so natural to Western ways of thinking, does violence to the unity of Hinduism and imposes upon it a separation foreign to its doctrine and practices.'[57] This may be admitted (it has been argued above that 'religion' is not a natural kind, but an artificial concept, 'a conceptual tool [which] ought not to be confused with an ontological category'[58]), but only with the recognition that *any* application of *any* concept at all to the world is, in the same sense, a 'distortion'. The primary problem is not that the concepts we apply to the world shape our view of the world but that we forget that this is inevitably the case.

This is not to say that all representations are equally distorting. As suggested by Brian K. Smith, one way of evaluating representations is whether they are 'sufficiently nuanced to allow for the representational capabilities of the others whom one, inevitably, is in the process of

[54] This is hardly the first time that a religion has been influenced by political factors. Thapar's own article refers to earlier changes in Hinduism prompted by political factors such as patronage.
[55] Thapar 1997: 54.
[56] Smart 1974: 46.
[57] Lach and Van Kley 1993: 1029, cited above p.92.
[58] McCutcheon 1997: viii.

representing.'[59] It has been suggested that, for example, the works of Ziegenbalg show considerable capacity to reflect the self-representations of those he represents. We cannot, however, evaluate representations by how far they match up to 'undistorted' reality, that is, a reality to which we have immediate, non-conceptual, access. All of our representations are mediated through our concepts. The recognition of this fact itself provides another criterion for evaluating particular representations, that is, how far the author of a particular representation is aware of the inevitable partiality of that representation itself.

On this criterion, our judgement on the seventeenth- and early-eighteenth century authors we have discussed is mixed. While they aspire to an 'undistorted' view of Hinduism, they were mostly aware that their circumstances have prevented such a view. Lord, Roger, Ziegenbalg and Cœurdoux claim only limited applicability for their work. Pons writes that his own work 'is not to be regarded as more than a draft, to which the most able hand will certainly have much to add, and perhaps much to retract.'[60] Anquetil's realization of these limitations inspired his proposed 'Académies ambulantes'.

The ideal of an undistorted view of Hinduism returns us to the parallel with the cartographic ideal which drove the processes described by Edney in his account of 'the geographical construction of British India'.[61] Edney writes:

> The formation of this cartographic ideal had two stages. First, the Enlightenment philosophes developed an epistemological ideal: correct and certain archives of knowledge could be constructed, they believed, by following rational processes epitomized by mapmaking. In the case of mapmaking, however, the epistemological ideal was undermined by recognized flaws in cartographic technologies. The second stage in the formulation of the cartographic ideal accordingly came with the widespread promulgation of a technological solution – "triangulation" – which promised to perfect geographical knowledge.[62]

[59] Smith 1996b: 366, cited above, p.52.

[60] 'ce que je vous marque ici, ne doit même être regardé que comme une ébauche à laquelle une main plus habile auroit bien des traits à ajoûter, & peut-être plusieurs à retrancher.' XXVI: 256.

[61] Edney 1997.

[62] Edney 1997: 17. The flaws in existing cartographic technology arose from the difficulties in quantifying degrees of error in the different methods of determining latitude and longitude. 'What triangulation offered was a systematic technology whereby geographic information could be made truly certain and comprehensive. Its principles were relatively simple. The surveyor first imagines a series of straight lines joining the tops of hills or tall buildings. The hilltops are selected so that the lines form either a long chain of triangles or a network of interlocking triangles spread out across the landscape ... The result is a rigorous mathematical framework in which all points are defined with respect to each other ... The net result of the greater accuracy of triangulation, of its greater degree of congruence with the land, of its greater degree of control, and of its use in measuring the figure of the earth is that triangulation is held to offer the potential perfection of the map's relationship with the territory mapped. Triangulation defines an exact equivalence between the geographic archive and the world. Triangulation makes it possible to conceive of a map constructed at a scale of 1:1.' (Edney 1997: 19–21).

Anquetil's travelling academicians represent an equivalent technological solution to the problems in obtaining 'an entirely satisfactory notion'[63] of countries such as India. In our own time, when there are professional scholars of the sort Anquetil thought necessary, the barrier to obtaining an accurate view of Hinduism has been seen to lie in the category 'Hinduism' itself.[64] The critique of 'Hinduism' as 'a concept so *soft* and *slippery*, so opaque and vague, that its use all but brings critical analysis to a halt and intellectual discourse to the verge of paralysis (if not futility)'[65] suggests that what is needed is a new technological solution, in this case better categories. However, as Edney points out, the epistemological ideal which has inspired these technological solutions, 'is itself open to an extensive critique ... such perfection and total comprehensiveness is impossible *in practice*.'[66] Moreover the '"technological fix" offered by triangulation has served to intensify the Enlightenment's "cartographic illusion" of the "mimetic map."'[67] The illusion of such a map, 'ignores the reasons why specific institutions make maps in the first place: to stand in for, to represent, the territories they depict in a wide variety of personal, social and cultural exchanges.'[68] The same impossible ideal of a perfect and comprehensive account of Indian religious beliefs and practices, a view not 'distorted' by the use of conceptual tools such as 'Hinduism', is implied in the critiques of Hinduism discussed in chapter two above. Friedhelm Hardy writes that in describing Hinduism:

> we are dealing with a jungle. The ideal would be to describe it as a total eco-system, but this will never be achieved. But it is still possible to do more than just pluck a few flowers. There are elements of an order here; it is just extremely important to know whose order or 'map' one is using.[69]

Whether referring to the concept in the writers we have discussed, or in contemporary academic studies of Hinduism, or even politicized reformulations of the concept, criticism of *any* construction of

[63] 'd'avoir sur ces contrées des notion entierement satisfaisantes' Anquetil 1771: x–xi.

[64] Inden argues that 'precisely because we have not made ourselves aware of the major assumptions and presuppositions built into Indology, we continue to produce and validate studies of Hinduism that have failed to struggle free of the construct' he critiques (Inden 1990: 129–130).

[65] Frykenberg 1997: 87.

[66] Edney 1997: 17.

[67] Edney 1997: 21.

[68] Edney 1997: 25.

[69] Hardy 1990: 145–6. It is not clear to what extent Hardy realizes the theoretical and not just the practical impossibility of realising this ideal. Earlier uses of the jungle metaphor are discussed by Inden (Inden 1990: 86–7).

'Hinduism' as a distortion is, insofar as it depends upon the ideal of a perfect and comprehensive account of Indian religious beliefs and practices, unsustainable. Thapar's critique of 'Syndicated Hinduism' depends upon her claim to be able 'to comprehend the *real* religious expression of Indian civilization'.[70] The claim that 'Syndicated Hinduism' is somehow less real than other expressions of Indian religiosity cannot be sustained. It is precisely the claim to have privileged access to what Hinduism 'really is' that underlies the politicized projection of *Hindutva*. Rather than offering a competing view of what Hinduism 'really' is which, for example, emphasizes not 'the exclusiveness of the Vedic religion' but 'that attitude of religious liberality which is truly admirable in Hindu culture',[71] we should refuse all essentialist claims to a supposed 'real' nature of Hinduism.

[70] Thapar 1997: 79, emphasis added.
[71] Stietencron 1997: 48–49.

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Index

Neue Hallesche Berichte
Bd. 3

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalgs „Genealogie der malabarischen Götter"
Edition der Originalfassung von 1713, mit Einleitung, Analyse und Glossar

von Daniel Jeyaraj

Halle, 2003. X, 502 S.
ISBN 3-931479-45-5 br. EUR 22,00

Der protestantische Missionar Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719) lebte 13 Jahre in Südindien und verfaßte im Jahre 1713 sein bahnbrechendes, religionsgeschichtliches Hauptwerk mit dem Titel „Genealogie der malabarischen Götter". Dieses Buch ist ein Meilenstein in der europäischen Erforschung der indischen Religionsgeschichte. Der bis heute aktuelle Text liegt nun erstmals in zuverlässiger Edition vor, versehen mit einer ausführlichen historischen Analyse und einem umfangreichen Glossar. Der Religionswissenschaftler Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg wird damit dem unverdienten Vergessen entrissen.

Daniel Jeyaraj ist Associate Professor of World Christianity an der Andover Newton Theological School.

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Bd. 2

„Arier" und „Draviden"
Konstruktionen der Vergangenheit als Grundlage für Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmungen Südasiens

Herausgegeben von Michael Bergunder und Rahul Peter Das

Halle, 2002. X, 251 S.
ISBN 3-931479-34-X br. EUR 11,00

Die Frage nach der Geschichte beinhaltete zu allen Zeiten auch die Frage nach der eigenen Identität. Während der britischen Kolonialherrschaft im 19. Jahrhundert begründeten westliche Indologen und christliche Missionare unter Beteiligung Gelehrter der traditionellen einheimischen Wissenssysteme eine südasiatische Geschichtsschreibung, in der die Südasiaten als die Nachkommen unterschiedlicher Völker (insbesondere Arier und Draviden) betrachtet wurden. Diese orientalistischen Geschichtstheorien über Ereignisse, die tausende Jahre zurücklagen, fanden unter unterschiedlichen Vorzeichen Eingang in den politischen Diskurs, und in der Folgezeit wurden diese Projektionen in hohem Maße Bestandteil des Selbstverständnisses verschiedenster politischer Bewegungen und Parteien moderner südasiatischer Staaten. Heute mündet in Südasien fast jede Diskussion über die Vor- und Frühgeschichte beinahe automatisch in eine Debatte um soziale und politische Machtinteressen. In jüngster Zeit sind es vor allem sogenannte hindu-nationalistische Kreise, die ihre politische Legitimation aus der Vorgeschichte zu ziehen versuchen. Der vorliegende Band leistet damit auch einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Aufhellung der geistigen Hintergründe des im deutschsprachigen Raum immer noch wenig verstandenen Phänomen des Hindu-Nationalismus.